

**CREATE** ARTS.ORG.UK

*Dad's  
in  
Prison*

This book is for: .....

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## Foreword

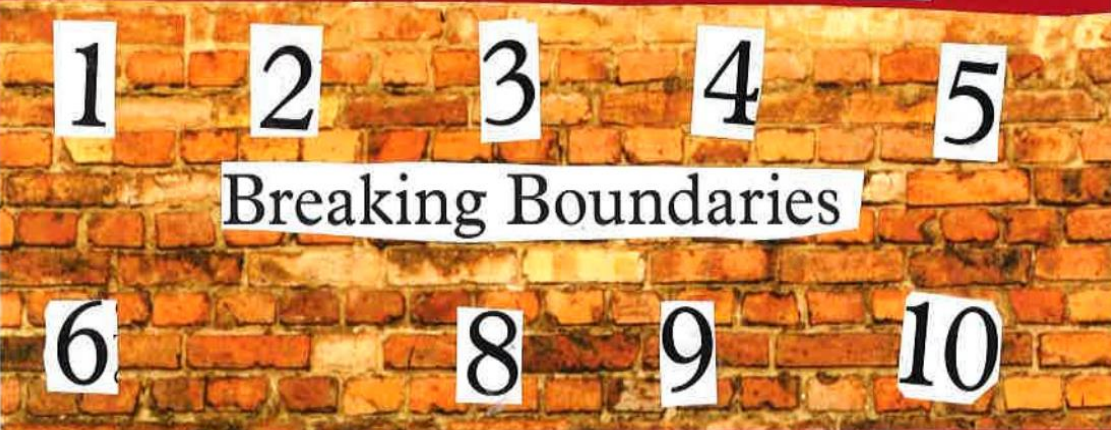
If your dad is in prison this book is for you, and every other little girl or little boy or young person who is feeling the same sense of loss and confusion. Your mind will be full of questions for which you need and deserve to have answers. One of the biggest questions you may have in your mind is, “Does my dad still love me?”

In the following pages you will find loving reassurance brimming over. Lots of children have Dads who they don't see very often because of work – some Dads who drive lorries can be away from home for weeks. Dads who work on submarines and ships can be away from home for months. Your Dad might be away from home for much longer because he's in prison – but it doesn't mean he doesn't love and miss you just like any other Dad. The truth is Dads in prison miss you more, think about you more, dream about you more and make more wonderful and exciting plans for when you can all be together again. It's not easy having your Dad in prison.

Dads in prison have written this for you to help you connect your feelings and your thoughts with your Dad, to help you to be brave and strong, as your Dad wants you to be – and most of all not to be ashamed or embarrassed and always to remember how precious you are to him. Your Dad is proud of you.

I hope that reading the lovely, loving thoughts and feelings in this beautiful little book will help you still to be proud of him.

**Erwin James, writer / Create Patron**



## Dad's in Prison

I'm waiting for the day when we can spend all our time together again.  
I'm waiting for the day when you will wake me up and help me brush my teeth and wash my face.  
I'm waiting for the day when you can help me put on my school uniform and clean my shoes.  
The day you will brush my hair.  
I'm waiting for the day when you will make me breakfast as we watch morning cartoons together.  
I'm waiting for the day when you will walk me through the school gates.  
I'm waiting for the day when you will be there to collect me again from the school gates.  
I'm waiting for the day when we can walk through the park kicking leaves and chasing my ball.  
I'm waiting for the day when we sit and do my homework together.  
I'm waiting for the day when we can sit and watch TV together.  
I'm waiting for the day when we can make my dinner together.  
I'm waiting for the day when you give me a bath and dress me in my pyjamas.  
I'm waiting for the day when you tuck me into bed and read me a story.  
I'm waiting for the day when you kiss me goodnight.  
I'm waiting...

Waiting for that day.

### **Why did you abandon me?**

I made a mistake and because of my actions I have to face the consequences. I can't leave before my time is complete. I didn't do it to hurt you. I never wanted to be away from you. It was not my choice but it was my fault.

### **Are you in prison because I've done something wrong?**

This is a consequence of my actions and no fault of yours. It's not my decision, I want to come home. It's just like when the teacher puts you on 'time out'. This is my 'time out'. It's not time for me to leave yet, I'm just waiting for permission, it shouldn't be long, it won't be forever. I love you very much and care for you more than you know. This is NOT your fault and if I could be with you, I would. I regret my actions - because of them I can't be there with you. I'm sorry.



**What did you  
do today?**

*I wonder how much  
you've grown?*

**Do you miss me like  
I miss you?**



**Why can't I see you when we talk on the phone?**

Because we can't have video calls on a mobile phone - we're not allowed to have them in prison. All I can do is apologise – it's part of my punishment. These are the rules; by learning to follow rules like you do in school I will build a better future for us.

**Why can't I call you?**

Because of my mistake I'm not allowed to accept your calls. If I could take your calls I would. It's part of my punishment and I can't leave until I've completed the time. The worst part of it all is being away from you. If it was up to me you wouldn't have to call me – I'd be there with you.

**Why can't I see you all the time?**

If I could see you all the time, I would. I'm only allowed to have so many visits a month. If it was up to me I would have more – it's not my decision.

**Why have you changed so much?**

My appearance may have changed but my feelings for you haven't. Everybody changes but nothing will ever change the way I feel about you. Every experience changes you as a person.

**What should I do when you're in prison?**

Try not to worry about me. Have fun. Be good. Think about me like I think about you.

**What is the worst part of being in prison?**

As the end of a visit approaches I look at the clock, knowing my time is nearly up. My stomach tenses, my feelings increase and I know deep down we have to be strong for each other.

The joy of visits comes to an end when you have to leave. The walk away with a brave face is the type of stuff that makes a grown man cry. I ask myself why did I come to prison, why did I put you through all this pain living without me?

The worst part is being away from you.

**What do I say when someone asks me why you're in prison?**

You could say to them: My Dad made a mistake and he's somewhere where he can learn from that mistake so he doesn't make it again.





### **Do you miss me?**

More than you can imagine. I know I may not be there but I'm always with you and you with me. I'm always counting down the days to our next visit.

### **Do you think about me?**

I think about you every minute of every day; when I'm watching cartoons, when I'm eating in my room, when I'm dozing off at the end of the day and trying to get to sleep.

I want to squeeze you tight and hope you forgive me. I hope you're okay and I feel such shame of putting this hurt upon you.

I deeply regret what I did, I'm never going to get this time back. I promise I'll make the time up.

I'm still here. You're still in my heart and in my memories, I hope I'm still in your heart and your memories too. Don't worry, I never left you.

Soon we will make some more memories and be even stronger for this experience.

### **Do you want to come home?**

There's nothing I want more – I can't wait till my time comes.

The only thing I get to look forward to as the minutes move into hours and the hours move into days, is hoping the days pass quickly so I can get back to being your hero.

**What it's like in there?**

It's not like home. Prison isn't what you expect.

The hardest part is being away from you.

I have regular showers and all the things I need apart from you. I eat with my friends and we sometimes play games. I have new friends but I never forget you, my best friend.

I've got your photos and cards on my wall because I miss you so much. I have a bed to sleep in at night but I struggle to fall asleep thinking of you. I kiss your picture every night hoping you feel it too.

**What is your room like?**

The room I stay in is small but I try to make it like home – your pictures are on all the walls.





**What are you eating?**

Three meals a day, the food is not brilliant. I eat a lot of pasta, potatoes and bread but it's not as good as the food I eat with you.

**What do you do for fun?**

Trying to have fun without you is hard but all the lads make the most of the time we have together.

I have music to play, and have a TV to watch but I often find myself reading your favourite books.

**Are you safe?**

It's like I'm wrapped in bubble wrap, but not as safe as I feel in your cuddles.







**When you get home, what will it be like? You've been away for a long time and now my world has changed.**

We'll soon be together again and I will watch you grow  
Watch as your smile makes my eyes glow  
I promise the tears will no longer flow.  
Being away from you has been hard for me  
Now that time is over, my mistakes I can see  
I just hope someday you can forgive me.

They can lock the locks but they can't stop the clocks. Soon I'll be back where I belong, I'm sorry I went away for so long.

Oh when, my dear children, the time does come  
I shall show you the obstacles I've overcome  
But even these lonely nights I've spent alone  
All I ever did was imagine myself being home.

When I first get to see you we will have a great day being a family, nice food and plenty of games. Endless affection and hugs.

It has been a long time but one thing stays the same: our love is not in vain. And although a lot has changed, I've changed for the better, to be a better Daddy to you.

When this is over we can do all the fun things we did before I went away; make even bigger cakes. You'll be a bit older so you can go even higher on the swings and we can play for hours on end.

When I leave prison I'm going to be giving you the biggest hugs. I'm not sure I will be able to let you go.

When I leave prison I'm going to be spoiling you over and over for all the times we've missed together.

When I leave prison I'm going to be with you every step of the way to help you through the tough times.

We will play, we will laugh, we will smile, we will cry.  
I promise I won't leave you again.

No more waiting.



Dads in prison have written this for you to help you connect your feelings and your thoughts with your Dad, to help you to be brave and strong, as your Dad wants you to be – and most of all not to be ashamed or embarrassed and always to remember how precious you are to him.