

Pass It On®...

A Good Father Goes a Long Way.

Ron Howard's father made a few suggestions to Andy Griffith. The result is an endearing father-and-son relationship that millions still watch today.

Living in Hollywood is a challenge. Growing up a child actor almost guarantees a life of dysfunction. Without a strong father, Howard could have taken the path of least resistance. But his father was there from the beginning, protecting, loving, guiding. And sacrificing. Rance Howard was a working actor in 1960 when his son Ron got the role of Opie on "The Andy Griffith Show." Rance put his own career on hold to look after his son on set.

At the time, TV shows featured boys who were bratty, always getting into trouble and making smart remarks. Dennis the Menace was a hit as a troublemaking, mop-headed boy. "Leave It to Beaver" featured boys who rubbed adults the wrong way. The wisecracking, annoying trope was all the rage. It's also how the character of Opie was originally written.

After the first reading, Rance Howard sat down with Andy Griffith and gently encouraged him to make Opie's relationship with his TV dad a little more tender and innocent, a little more real, like his relationship with his own boys. Andy listened and took the suggestion to heart. When shooting started, Opie emerged as a new kind of television boy, a kid who had a special relationship with his father, who helped his son through life's challenges.

Seeing a boy own up to his mistakes and a father own up to his—traits influenced by Rance and Ron—created an honest relationship that families still look to today. "He stood for something that people could recognize as integrity," Ron says of his father. "And we benefited from that."

Looking up to your father is a powerful force. We need role models in life. We need people who love us and help us learn from our mishaps. Ron Howard avoided many of the pitfalls of growing up in Hollywood. He went on to a career full of successes, creating inspiring films that encourage us to find the best in ourselves: "Apollo 13," "A Beautiful Mind" and "Cinderella Man"; the kind of films you love to watch with your family.

The influence of a good father goes on for generations and touches lives that would be impossible to count. You can start with one of Griffith's most endearing lines: "You're my young'un, and I love you more than anything or anybody in the whole world, and nothin' or nobody can ever change that!"

Parenting...[PassItOn.com](https://www.passiton.com)

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