The Day You Become Redundant

By Rabbi Dan Moskovitz

Parenthood is ultimately about becoming redundant in your child's life. It's difficult to comprehend as you hold your newborn baby in your arms, but if you do your job of fatherhood correctly your services will ultimately no longer be necessary.

The art and the joy of parenthood is to raise a self-reliant child, who grows to become a self-reliant adult. How do we pass on to our children the knowledge, skills, values and beliefs they will need so that when we are no longer ever-present the teaching will remain with them as they carry it into the world?

The Talmud instructs that a father is obligated to provide his son (child) "with Torah, a trade, and some say, teach him how to swim" (Kiddushin 29:A). What Jewish values will you teach your child? What will you teach your child about how to work and also how to balance work and family? How will you teach your child to swim, to let go of the edge and navigate the rough waters of life so as to safely get to the other side?

If you can do these things then there will come a moment(s) when your child will turn to you and say, "I got it Dad" and you will know that he/she truly does. At that time say the *She'cheianu* the blessing for having survived and been given strength to bare witness to a joyous occasion. Oh and one more thing, you might cry (yes men do cry) but know this, those tears, they will be bittersweet, the day you become redundant.