



Ned Hickson

Want to be a better father? Get a bigger grill

Tomorrow morning I will awaken to sizzle of bacon and eggs, the aroma of freshly brewed coffee, and the shuffle of approaching feet as I lay in bed quietly thinking to myself, *My God, my wife is leaving me.*

Then I'll remember, *Wait — It's Father's Day!* A day when we fathers are revered for our wisdom, patience and, in a few rare instances, our neckwear. For one whole day I'll be the perfect father since my wife will be handling everything for me. She does this to help me relax and enjoy my

special day.

The problem is, it's hard to relax when, by handling everything herself, my wife makes it clear I could be replaced by a dishwasher and a few extra power cords.

Okay, that's not entirely true.

I am still left with "The Grilling of Food" as my main contribution to our family. I have managed to keep this duty the way most men do, by making the task of grilling appear as complicated and miserable as possible, even if it means faking a heat stroke while grilling pre-cooked hot dogs.

I realize there are many new fathers who have made themselves indispensable during the diaper-changing phase. Just remember: your indis-

pensability in this area — much like this morning's tightly-wrapped dooty — will eventually disappear into the Diaper Genie.

That's when grilling even the simplest things, such as a bratwurst, should be made to look as difficult as possible.

To do this, you'll need a large grill. The bigger the better. In fact, if a hibachi is your main grilling source, go now, hop into your vehicle, and accidentally back over your hibachi several times and replace it with something more practical.

And, practically speaking, we're talking a grill roughly the size of a Prius.

Why?

You need a large cooking surface so that you can convincingly spray down flames

and battle for control over a raging inferno that, if not for your grilling skill, would quickly consume everyone's bratwurst — and quite possibly the world.

Unless you are highly experienced in pyrotechnics, or live near an open gas line, trying to produce this same effect on a hibachi is very difficult.

Once you have your giant grill, you'll need to keep a spray bottle handy. Your wife will assume it's to prevent charring. This is partially true.

But mostly you'll be using it to spray on your face and body to appear as though you are perspiring when, in fact, you are frequently supplementing any loss of body fluid with liberal amounts of ice-cold beer hidden behind the grill.

Lastly, you should purchase a special, custom-made spatula that is so enormous and so heavy it can only be wielded with two hands. This will make the grilling process appear even more difficult by requiring a "spotter" every time you flip someone's burger.

Put all of this together — spray bottle, giant grill, two-handed spatula — and you'll have the dramatic image you want, which is that of a sweat-stained father staggering in and out of the flames of his

grill, both hands gripped tightly around the handle of his 50-pound spatula as he devoutly retrieves the evening meal.

Sure, this may sound like a lot of effort; you could fold clothes instead.

But the effort is worth it when it comes to family.

Besides, it's really hard to keep beer cold when it's hidden in the laundry.

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