

Ads show we can celebrate mom and dad – without selling either short

In today's marketing environment, it seems as though one gender cannot make progress without disparaging the other.



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However, a few inspiring and refreshingly positive television ads have recently managed to gain popularity while avoiding this pitfall.

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ing the courage to step away from the norm and, in doing so, not only bring men into the mainstream picture of the modern American parent, but also for doing so in a way that is perhaps more innovative than anything else: championing one gender without attacking, alienating or poking fun at the oth-

er gender.

Toyota has done a terrific job of bridging the strong bond between fathers and daughters. In the company's latest ad, Toyota depicts the various stages of a daughter's life where her dad is there to console, protect, guide and eventually send her out into the world with tears in his eyes. The message of the ad is to make bold choices – what better term to describe what any parent would want for his or her child, in particular a daughter?

In a seeming balance to Toyota, Nissan focused on the relationship between a father and his son. Perhaps too stereotypically, the father here is depicted as the absent father, a race car driver in this instance, and the son looking on, wanting to be just like his father. Of course, the soundtrack to this commercial is none other than "Cat's in the Cradle," but thankfully, the father realizes before it's

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too late that his son needs to physically see him and know that their relationship is more important than any job.

Dove has arguably the most moving, yet simple ad: clip after clip of young and adult children calling for "Dad" or "Daddy" at various stages of their lives. From the toddler needing help to the adult calling his father with the wonderful news of a pregnancy,

the commercial ends with a simple question and answer: "What makes a man stronger? Showing that he cares."

So why do these ads matter? Why are they so special? Here again, the answer is simple: because they are a rarity. Because they champion the roles dads play in the lives of children, both boys and girls, without denigrating the crucial and complementary role mothers play in those same children's lives. This spirit of gender equality is one to celebrate and emulate.

In fact, the path these three companies have forged serves as a marketing model for others and reminds parents everywhere that they are parents first, united by the love for their children and made stronger by a mutual appreciation of their unique strengths and differences.

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