

“Ten Ways to be a Great Dad” Ad Dad in the Spotlight



Alvaro Blake is a father of four, ages 12 to 28, and he sometimes finds that it's the numbers—especially when they come accompanied by \$\$ signs—that are the worst part of being a non-custodial dad. But the kids—they are the good part; and connecting with them through his poster's slogan, “Talk it Out,” comes naturally to this smooth talker.

Has the ad campaign changed your views of fatherhood?

It certainly has. It made me more receptive to others who are in the plight that I am in: the plight of being a weekend father. There's more camaraderie. I've gone to the [NYC DADS] events at Coney Island, Chelsea Piers, and seeing the same people doing the same thing; it made me enjoy what I do a little more.

Have you been able to bring to life the NYC DADS slogan, “Talk it out,” from your poster?

I've done more of it. The campaign made me really look at what I do. Getting to the crux of the issue, whatever it is; “Ok, You don't like the way I make you do this,” or “I make you do homework or play a video game.” And then after we talk it out, we can be friends again.



How have your kids responded to the ad campaign?

The 12 year-old; he says, “I feel like a movie star.” His friends take trips and they see him on the bus. He feels proud. And he thinks his dad looks pretty good.

Tell me some of the recent highs and lows of being a non-custodial dad.

This weekend was a low. Everything went to the maintenance, the child support. It's my daughter's graduation and I am unable to come up with the \$150 for the cap and gown and the senior fee. And the mother is leaving that on me even though she receives that "X" amount from my check. Usually, the things that are financial are the lows. And everything else is the high.

So, are you still feeling positive about being a dad?

I've always been pretty positive about that. My father, he left when I was 10 years old. [But] I've become friends with him after not speaking with him for 30 years.

Does he know about the ad campaign?

I mentioned it to him. And I sent him a picture of me with his grandson. He was ecstatic, because he's living through me.