

# Expressions

## A Safe Place

*"If you build it, he will come."* Seven small, but very powerful words to sons around the world who have played catch with their fathers while growing up. The movie *Field of Dreams* captured this moment perfectly. ESPN columnist Bill Simmons was quoted as saying, "I've always thought there were two types of people: those who love *Field of Dreams*, and those who have no soul."

Baseball, apple pie, and a father and son playing catch are about as American as it gets. I have no greater memory of my childhood than the times my dad and I played catch. We would throw for hours and hours. No words needed to be spoken.

It was Sunday, April 15, 1989, and I remember it like it was yesterday. Three generations of the Lyon family together at Dodger Stadium. My dad wanted to make sure he was there when my own son attended his first Dodgers game. Trevor was only eighteen months old and had no idea what was going on, but it was a great day for the three of us; my dad, my son, and me at Dodger Stadium, eating Dodger Dogs, and listening to Vin Scully on the radio as we watched the game. That was a day I will always remember.


Vin Scully, the Hall of Fame broadcaster and "voice" of the Los Angeles Dodgers, was something my dad and I always shared. My dad taught me to appreciate Vinny, as we called him. More storyteller than broadcaster, his voice is like no other.

I got to spend a few days with my dad the summer he passed. He was bedridden in his living room and couldn't open his eyes those

last few days, but each of those nights we were together we would listen to Vinny call the Dodger games. We sat together for three hours, a peaceful feeling in the room each night as Vinny told his stories. I remember one moment that summer when my dad asked me if I wanted to play catch. I just said, "Sure," but knew, of course, it was just a dream—Parkinson's was winning the battle. Five minutes later he wanted to know why we weren't out playing catch. He asked me if I was afraid, if I thought I couldn't handle his best stuff. As a tear rolled down my cheek, I told him that was exactly right. About an hour later he spoke again. He knew he was dying. "I am never going to play catch or swing a bat again, am I?" he asked. I told him, "No Dad, probably not." Three days later my dad left us. I remembered the night I won my first fast pitch softball world championship and I called my dad. He was so proud.

Musician Marc Cohn wrote: *"How many roads you've traveled, how many dreams you've chased, across sand and sky and gravel, looking for one safe place, will you make a smoother landing, when you break your fall from grace, into the arms of understanding, looking for one safe place."*

I will always remember the days we played catch for hours and hours; that was my one safe place. Playing catch is something dads and sons have always done, and I hope always will.

Thanks Dad. 

—Tim Lyon

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