



His Father Still: A Parenting Memoir

Tim Hollister

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Reid Hollister was a rambunctious, handsome, and sometimes rebellious teenager. While he delighted many friends with humor and antics, he struggled as a student, regularly tested his parents' patience, and chafed at efforts to guide and discipline him. As he began his senior year in a private high school, Reid suddenly found himself accused of misconduct, which he vehemently denied. Several days later, driving on a highway, Reid died in a one-car crash.

His Father Still: A Parenting Memoir is, first, Reid's father's disarmingly candid account of the tumult of parenting Reid through his teenage years, and then confronting the unthinkable obligations of a father to a son after a sudden tragedy. But this book is about much more than parenting and grief. In the months following Reid's crash, as Tim Hollister worked to steady himself and his family, he found himself consumed by an accelerated need to answer two questions: Had he been a good father? And in raising his son, had he struck the right balance between exposing him to life's risks while protecting him from life's dangers?

Answers came in large part from a flood of condolences conveyed through letters and emails, and also in social media posts -- which at the time, 2006, were a brand-new phenomenon. From these messages emerged a mosaic of Reid's character and personality that was barely known to Tim while Reid was alive because, as parents raise teens by "letting out the tether," they see less of and know less about their kids. Thus, after Reid's passing, Tim learned more about his son than he had known while Reid was alive. While this portrait arrived too late, it was not unwelcome; Reid's crash and its aftermath eventually segued to Tim forging these new insights into the foundation of a renewed relationship with his son that was, if nothing else, a sustainable way forward.

This book is, therefore, remarkable not only for its honesty but also for its forays into a breadth of universal issues, topics that shaped both Tim's experience as a father while Reid was alive and his reconstruction of their parent-child bond after the crash: balancing protection and freedom when raising a teen; delivering discipline; reacting to a school's contested accusation of misconduct; supervising a teen driver; writing an obituary and eulogy for a teen; composing condolence messages, especially through social media; preserving and then giving away a deceased's possessions; using the aftermath of tragedy to rebuild a frayed relationship; counting blessings; establishing an enduring connection with a loved one who has passed away; and harnessing the power of communities to care for those reeling from a sudden loss.

Tim Hollister is an environmental attorney who has been ranked among the *Best Lawyers in America*. After Reid's crash in 2006, Tim became an advocate for safer teen driving. In 2009, he launched a national blog for parents of teen drivers, "From Reid's Dad," www.fromreidsdad.org, and in 2013 he published **Not So Fast: Parenting Your Teen Through the Dangers of Driving** (Chicago Review Press), www.nsfteendriving.com. In 2010, the U.S. Department of Transportation honored Tim's advocacy with the nation's highest civilian award for traffic safety, and in 2014, the Governors Highway Safety Association recognized **Not So Fast** with its own national public service award. Tim has appeared on the CBS Evening News with Scott Pelley, the "Home and Family Show" on the Hallmark Channel, and Kyra Phillips' Raising America on HLN. He lives in Connecticut with his wife and daughter.

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