

# SHOWNOTES - Dustin Freeman (23/50)

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## SPEAKERS

Dustin Freeman (Guests), Scott Hilton (Host)

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Scott Hilton (Host) 00:15

Welcome to another episode of The that's my dad podcast. You know, our purpose here is to inspire young men, young fathers to become great dads. And we believe you inspire people by telling stories. So the podcast is about 85% inspiration and 15% instruction. And we always like to bring in a guest who has a an inspirational story. And sometimes those guests would bring them in, and we don't even know what their stories are. And that that's what's happened today. I've learned a lot about Dustin Freeman, he's our guests. Welcome to the program, like you, Scott for him. All right, good deal, Dustin is the director of the Eagle Rock ranch independent living program. That's a program that I'm proud to say, I founded back in 1997. It's been continuously running since then. And what that program does is it prepares young men for life out on their own. We don't want them to be dependent on the government, we don't want them to be dependent on everybody else, we want them to be a contributing member of society. So we take young men who have had a difficult time through no fault of their own lot of the times and we try to train them. And when I retired three, four years ago now, Dustin, stepped in with Belinda hitl. And took over. So I want to jump into your story, your personal story. It's something I was not aware of. Recently, and it's a it's a little bit of a sensitive story. In some respects. You want to be respectful to everybody. But yes, sir. Just kind of jump in there and tell me your story. It's a little bit of a surprise to me.

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Dustin Freeman (Guests) 01:53

So a little bit of my story. And it's not something that I just tell a whole lot, but I've really pride on this. And me and my wife discussed it last night. And you know, when I was younger, and maybe most people don't know this, but a lot of it comes from how my dad did raise me. But when I was younger, probably two or three. I'm not 100% Sure the age but my parents divorced. And my mom got custody of me and I went and lived with my mom. And we moved up to well, we actually moved all over the place. In the beginning we were we were in Hokes bluff, Glencoe sand rock, I probably went to five or six different schools throughout this whole process. And my both my parents remarried, my dad remarried, my mom remarried. So while I was living my mom, we had you know, she was with my stepdad. And he worked full time, he was a welder. And we ended up with more kids. When my mom remarried, I had a sister, an

older sister, that was already my stepdads I had an older brother already, but then we had three more. So I ended up I had four brothers and a sister. And when we moved to San rock, I lived up there and we lived in a double wide out in the middle of the woods. And I can remember some of it you know, we didn't even have athletic real plumbing to begin with. And we were going out in the woods to begin with, because we were trying to plumb this trailer in and do all this and they were working real hard to make it happen. And but as I as I lived with them and grew up kind of you know, things, things kind of changed. It was a little different. You know, my mom, and stepdad, as I was growing up, were both they both drank, and had that had that as an issue for them. And, you know, a lot of times would come say, on the weekends, I would always have friends over and they drank or they like put a pig in the ground and roasted lead and how good fun but a lot of times when all that ended and stuff, you know, we might get the brunt of a little bit of that anger drunk or that, that upset or whatever like that. So a lot of it. It seems sometimes it was a little verbally aggressive towards us. And, and kind of dealt with some of that, you know, we had and then I'd go see my dad, you know, on the weekends or every other weekend when I go see him and I would notice such a difference in between lifestyles. My dad and stepmom well, they were involved in church. And every time I'd go spend the weekend with him, I'd go to church with him. I loved it. I wanted to be there but also I loved my mom. And I love my brothers and sister and I wanted to be with him too. But I didn't really quite understand I was still young I was still under 12 years old. Well, time just kind of continued to go on and it just didn't seem to get better. On my end, I just I didn't, I didn't feel at home sometimes I didn't feel I'm not gonna say love because I always felt loved by my mom. But it always just kind of it was it was just kind of rough. It just wasn't the home environment in my eyes even at that age 1011 years old, that I pictured it was supposed to be like, and it kind of came to a breaking point, when I turned 12, I knew I knew I was smart enough to understand that at that time, I couldn't go before Judge until the judge where I wanted to live till I was 12. You know, and, you know, at that time, I was really struggling, I didn't know when I finally turned 12 years old. And I was still kind of back and forth with it, you know, just kind of dealing with it going through the motions. And, you know, I had had something, you know, we had had an experience kind of happen, that just really kind of put me over the age living there. And I won't go into full details on that. But it, it broke my heart when that happened and kind of put me to a point where I was really angry, I didn't understand, you know, what was happening. And I went to my dad. And I told him, I said, I want to come live with you, I want to make this happen, you know, I can't I don't want to live here anymore. So, you know, we went through the whole process went through court went through, went through all that. And my dad did custody on me. So I went live with my dad and kind of broke my heart begin with because I knew I hurt my mom a little bit through all that. But I went live with my dad. Well, this time kind of went home. You know, I was still visiting my mom and stuff. But my stepdad got he ended up being a traveling welder. So they ended up going to Illinois, up north Wisconsin, and all these different places like that. So I didn't really see my mom, stepdad and brothers that much anymore, because they they moved and they were always going to different places. And as I lived with my dad, you know, I learned a lot more through that. And I'll tell you this, my dad, never once in my life that I remember, ever worked me ever used anything. My dad just had this firm voice. And when he used it, it put me you know, it put me down like I was I was doing like Yes, sir. And I'm doing it was a healthy, it was a healthy fear, I guess is the best way when my dad would bring that in nothing wrong with a healthy figure, by the way. Exactly. There's not and that's and that's what my dad brought to the table in any time. It was funny because as I got older living with my dad, me and him, I have some good argument, you know, as I'm getting 1617 and made him we're getting this big argument or something. And you know, he would, of course, always win. And not always end up with my stuff taken up or grounded or something like that happening. But it was funny because my stepmom would always sit down with him. Whenever I'd go, you know, grabbed me to my room or whatever, then she'd sit down

and she'd tell him, you know, how you just reacted? And how you just talk to your son? What if something happened? What if that was the last thing you said to him? So she would always convict him on that. And he would always come back in and sit down and have more of a loving conversation with me about why

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Scott Hilton (Host) 08:25

your dad was mad enough to admit? Yes, he's made a mistake and come and sit down with you. Yes. How does that? What kind of respect does that cause a child to develop for their dad, when your dad can sit down and apologize or come to you? What does that cause you to think about your dad

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Dustin Freeman (Guests) 08:41

so so that gives me a lot more deal respect to my dad, and it made me love my dad even more. Because not many people knew that and many grown people that can come in admit that they're wrong, even when they make a mistake. Because a lot of times in those moments, you're the adult you're the grown person, you know, this is, this is how it is you know, and you know, get over it type mentality. But it shaped me into a better person because of that, because now even now with my kids, I might get aggravated at my five year old daughter, because she just snapped at my my wife or you know, or she, you know, was very disrespectful. But even after that I'm like, Okay, I should have handled that different Now sit down with her. And I'll explain why and what happened and why we did that. Just to kind of go a little further into the story. You know, I had a lot of anger and stuff towards my mom and my stepdad. And, and kind of how they they handled all that and how I felt and stuff through that. But I do know, you know, as I got older and more mature, and when I had my heart it honestly probably took me till I had my first child, Aubrey to be able to honestly forgive my mom. Instead, I had to do all that. And, you know, God's changed them later, totally different people, now God has taken them and change them. And they are some of the most loving, amazing grandparents you could ever see. And they, you know, I would trust them with my kids any day, you know, and that's, that's just, that's just the grace of God, and how we change that. And

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Scott Hilton (Host) 10:23

when there's hope the guys that you deal with, at Eagle Rock, and the guys that we deal with in the community need to know there's hope, but sometimes it feels like they feel like their parents will never change. Exactly. And like, it's just gonna always be a terrible situation. And but there's always hope that things can can turn out better. So bring us on forward, you live with your dad there through high school. So

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Dustin Freeman (Guests) 10:48

it's all day and I lived with my dad through high school. And, you know, and everything, you know, I'm not gonna say everything was just rainbows and unicorns. But I learned a ton through my dad, and some of the biggest stuff that I learned from my dad was responsibility. Because when I graduated, he, you know, he took me to the dealership, and he cosign for me to get a

jeep. And I had been doing well, I'd been working, you know, I've been doing what I needed to, I was still living with him and stuff like that. And I was my HTC, GL makes payments. And he told me straight up, he said, If you don't make the payments on this Jeep, you miss one payment, I'll put it in the front yard, and I'll sell it. And I said, I said, Yes, sir. You know, okay, I owe, you don't overly think that's that serious in the moment. But Tom kind of went home and I was working a job, it was to a temp agency. And I had lost the job at the temp agency. And I had a car payment coming up. And I didn't have the money to pay for it. And I was honestly at the moment was not in a huge hurry to just grab another job wasn't even thinking of those consequences at the moment. Well, my dad receives a phone call that says, hey, you're late on a car payment. Well, my dad comes and he gets to he don't really have a conversation at all with me. He just walks over and he gets my keys. And he takes the stuff out of Maggi and he sets it on the porch. And he drives my jeep to the end of the driveway and parks it and puts it for sale. So I didn't say anything to you. It was the whole count. The whole thing was how you missed your payment. I told you not to give me the keys. And that was that was there's no

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Scott Hilton (Host) 12:31

need and agony about it wasn't no, and just do what you got to do. And he parked

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Dustin Freeman (Guests) 12:34

it. And he sold it in a day. And it was gone. What a lesson. Yeah. So I had to learn an extremely hard lesson. And I will tell you in that moment, I despise my dad for everything. I didn't want to talk to him. I didn't want anything to do with him. Because he just took the Jeep that I had been paying Oh, and did that. But man looking back now, what are the lessons to be learned? And how what he was doing through those was shaping me to be the man that I am today. Now, it wasn't

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Scott Hilton (Host) 13:02

about the jeep. No, wasn't about it wasn't about the money. No, it was about teaching my son how to be a man.

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Dustin Freeman (Guests) 13:08

Yes. And that's what my dad was about. I mean, he was not and he still that way. And they would still do that, you know, and you know, and he'd still take me and he put me in my place if I did something stupid like that.

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Scott Hilton (Host) 13:20

Yeah. So you, you had some rough times as a as young man. So now you're working with those very guys that are in that age group that you were in when this happened? Yes, sir. kind of walk us through your development and up to come into the ranch. Because I know, I know you were going through a time of searching and trying to figure out what you really wanted to do.

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Dustin Freeman (Guests) 13:41

I've told a few people this story at Oberlin, I think not long ago this but I had this dream twice. And it was both times it was it woke me up at the same time. And each each of those nights and it was on the same day. And but my wife, before I had those dreams, my wife kept saying just go talk to her. Just go talk to her just say, you know, I was like, I don't know, I don't know, I had I had this dream that I was sitting in an office talking to Belinda about the job and accepting a job at Eagle Rock. That was the first time I had it. And I woke it woke me up middle of the night. And I was like okay, you know, so it's just all my dream. It wasn't it wasn't an overly long dream. But we, but I didn't find I told my wife about and she's like, Yeah, you need to go talk to her, you know, and I was like, It's during this just on my mind. I'm just thinking about it. Well, the next Sunday, I went to bed. Same exact dream. Same exact thing woke me up at the same exact time. And I've never had that happen before in my life and kind of woke me up again and I woke up my wife the next morning I said okay, I said I had the same dream same time I said I'm old text When you know, and I'd say exterior now the rest is history. And I met her in that office that I was having a dream in, which is Scott's old office, actually. And met her there. And we had a great conversation and, and you know, the rest is history. And and now I've been there for two and a half years again and running this independent living program. And but yeah, I mean, that's kind of my story in a nutshell, I think. I think

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Scott Hilton (Host) 15:25

so you say you reconciled? I don't know if that's the right word, but where your mom and stepdad? Yes, sir, how did you make things right? Because there was a little friction, we picked up on that.

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Dustin Freeman (Guests) 15:35

So so a lot of it was, once our firstborn, was born, they were still living in Wisconsin. And they moved back down to Hokes bluff, because they wanted to be, I wanted to be close, you know, it was their first grandbaby actually born was, was was this one and, and when I moved back down, you know, we just kind of slowly started to build that relationship back because I had not spent much time with my mom, our stepdad. And I couldn't even tell you how many years at that point. But um, we just started slowly, kind of letting them back in and talking to them and working with them. And, you know, I don't know that we ever just sat down and had a full blown conversation about when we were kids, and kind of how I failed and stuff like that. But, you know, I do know, that through all of this and her, she started going to church to the highlands with us, and we were going there and stuff and, and her getting saved and us having conversations on that and seeing who she is now. You know, I forgave her and I would have forgave her anyway. But her coming down here to be with her grandkids and to see us and to be around us. was a big deal. Big deal to me. Since I had not been with her or been around her and so many years.

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Scott Hilton (Host) 17:02

Yeah. So why don't I give you an opportunity to say that to your mom. Just like to do that? Sure.

I mean, I'm sure she'll watch this. Oh, yeah. Yeah, it's probably something you'd want to say your mom and stepdad.

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Dustin Freeman (Guests) 17:14

Yeah, yeah. And, and, you know, mom, stepdad, Dan. You know, I love you guys. I know, we had a rough, rough time kind of coming up and going through all of that. But But I love you guys. And I forgive y'all for anything that we did deal with. You guys are amazing. You're amazing grandparents. Your grandbabies do love you, and we love you. And, you know, we just look forward to the future that we continue to have with you guys. Happy and healthy. Through all of this.

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Scott Hilton (Host) 17:51

What do you think that's the you have you have two kids? What do you think it takes to be a great dad today?

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Dustin Freeman (Guests) 18:01

Number one, no Jesus. If you don't know, Jesus, if you don't have that relationship with him, it's not that you can't be a good dad, and still be there for your kids and stuff. But knowing Jesus and knowing the grace that He gives you daily, that's first and foremost, because I'm gonna say if if God didn't give me the grace that I don't deserve. If he didn't give me those things growing up, then I wouldn't be here today. And you got to have that. I mean, you got to be able to have grace for your kids, you got to understand that, you know, your kids are not perfect, they're gonna make mistakes, they're gonna have troubles, they're gonna have problems. But you got to be, you gotta be able to lead them in the way that Christ is leading you in the best way possible. And I don't mean, you're not going to mess up. They don't mean you're not going to have your ups and downs and stuff like that. But just strive to, number one, get in God's word daily. Pray for your kids, pray for your kids, pray for your spouse, and do that daily. And you will notice a difference, and you have to be prepared as a father, for the battles that come against your family.

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Scott Hilton (Host) 19:14

I want to talk to the boys at Eagle Rock. But that's not just the boys at Eagle Rock. That's kids everywhere. crates, kids that are in foster care, it's kids that are and other ranches. It's kids that are out there who just don't have a dad, you've been able and I've been able to see some of the challenges they face. And we both have some things that we would like to say to them. So I want to give you a chance first, first of all, what what do you say to inspire those young guys?

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Dustin Freeman (Guests) 19:45

So, you know, I guess to inspire them and kind of talk because of the way everything is now and how difficult the world is. You know, sometimes they come in completely defeated and want

and now difficult the world is. You know, sometimes they come in completely defeated or upset or you know, just You know, or maybe just things just aren't going their, their way that they, they kind of sleep through all that, you know, me telling them now because this will be the first time like, probably any of them have heard my full story and stuff like that is you got to you got to understand that bad things do happen even to good people, and there's gonna be rough patches, there's gonna be days that you feel like just giving up and just throwing in the towel and just forgetting just kind of forgetting everything and just moving on to something else. But it's in those days, that's what will help you to become a better man, when you stand up and go, You know what, today, it really is difficult today really is hard. But I know what's not going to be the worst, if this is the worst day of my life, then, yeah, it's gonna be good from here. So so to just kind of inspire them to understand that, you know, they are going through a difficult time. And they might be here, you know, they're here for not their reason, most of the time, not their reasoning. They can change their their story, they don't have to keep continue what they're doing, they don't have to continue the chain of what their family did, you know, maybe did to them or that they went through, they can break that and they can change that. But they're the only ones that can do that.

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Scott Hilton (Host) 21:22

So I would say the same thing. And if so many of those guys, who there, you know, some of their families are a mess, not all of them, I want to I want to be fair, but some of their families are a real mess. And I want to say to them that God can fix your family. Absolutely. But also want to say that if if the family never gets fixed, you can change you can flip the script, you can change it for your, your family. So I want to ask you as we get ready to close, your dad's been a wonderful dad to you. Yes. And I want to give you a chance to honor your dad. Absolutely. And if you would just look into this camera right over here. And this is your chance to speak your heart to your dad.

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Dustin Freeman (Guests) 22:10

Yeah, Dad, I just gotta tell you, I definitely would not be the man I am today. Without you, you definitely molded me into a hard working responsible father. Who cares for his kids, just the way that you cared for me even on those days where, you know, we might have been extremely mad at each other, you know, whatever. You know, you still show that you care that, you know, he loved me. And, you know, I honor you, you know for that. And I'm grateful that I had a father lucky to be able to be there for me to take me to the to the ball games to be there from you know, my track and field needs taken me to stay you know, on my desk is throw into do those things to have you there in my life. Through all that, and I'm grateful that you're here now for my grandkids and to, to love on them now and to spoil them that you get to now and and all that so So Dad, I love you. I'm grateful for you. And I look forward to many more years with you.

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Scott Hilton (Host) 23:30

Awesome. So Dustin, we've, we've we've had a lot of guests on the program and, and on the podcast, and a lot of them have been a lot older than you their kids are grown. And when kids get grown, they really develop a sense of appreciation for what their dads have done through

the years. But when they're little they also have a sense of appreciation that can be a little different. So as a gift to you the production career got a little a couple of little video clips from your family and just want to share those with you. Okay.



24:05

Aubrey, what is something that you love most about that? And where's your favorite place to go with



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the beach?



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And is there something you want to thank that for?



24:22

Um yeah, read to me every night before I go to bed. That's very sweet. Hey, baby, we



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just want to thank you for loving us like you do and protecting us. You truly are the greatest man I've ever known. And I have so much respect for how you always put Jesus first in your life and then a second and how you always strive to just be a better father and a better husband. We couldn't I As for anyone greater to have in you truly are the best we would be lost without you. And we just we love you so much.



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Evening I would love you to flew down back and I love you a camera as



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it's very sweet. A room can you say that? Can you say data?



25:28

Say hey





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dad. Okay, we love you baby. Oh, what are you up? Yeah,

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Scott Hilton (Host) 25:41

that's in the days coming. Where, you know those kids are gonna be grown. And I'm feel confident that they're gonna say the same things again, daddy, thank you for loving us to Pluto back for being there for us for reading for us at night. And you're not gonna regret it one bit. No, sir. Not Not at all. Has it make you feel?

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Dustin Freeman (Guests) 26:05

It definitely made it. She's so good. You know, I love them. I wouldn't be you know, my wife, kids, man. They're my rock. You know, they keep me going every day. And I love them so much. And I just look forward to those years growing up and with them and watching them grow.

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Scott Hilton (Host) 26:27

It's gonna be great. I want to tell you that I appreciate you stepping in when I retired. You know, we it's difficult to find people with the calling that you have. And when I retired, I told Belinda I said I don't know if it's sustainable. If you can't find the right people, you just can't you have all the money and facilities in the world if you don't have the right people, you're wasting your time. So I want to publicly personally thank you for stepping in and being Belinda's partner and helping and running that and for investing your your days and your nights. Been there. I know what difficult to do is I want to thank you for investing in those those man and continuing something that that I got to be a part of. I'd love to see it continue. God knows how long it will continue. And I'm so grateful that you've taken taking it and ran with it. Like to thank you. Appreciate you being here too. That'll conclude this episode of that's my dad where we're striving to break cycles of generational fatherlessness and we're trying to inspire fathers to become great dads. See you next week.