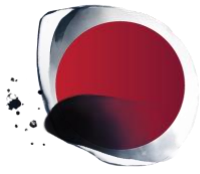


Balding Tires



The New Car: In the first year of my child's life, I became very conscious of safety. Vigilant may be a better way to describe my reaction to making sure that "my" child was safe, always. To this end, I made the decision to purchase the safest car money could buy, a Mercedes Benz. Of course, it had to be a used car but no matter, it felt and drove like a tank. The diesel engine even made it smell like one. My enthusiasm extended to the brand and the chase of the car but not, unfortunately, to the tires. Balding and aged they nevertheless took us on our 14-hour drive to see my father in Ohio for Christmas.

I had called ahead and shared my excitement with him. For me, this beast of a machine was my best car to date. As we pulled into our meeting spot, his favorite luncheon



restaurant chain, surprisingly he was standing in the parking lot waiting for us. As I slowly rolled into my parking spot, proud of the car, he looks on and with an absent expression raised his shoulders, arms slightly extended, signaling to me: “what is the big deal.”

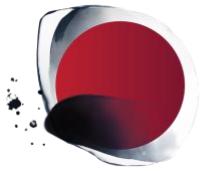
Once again, I am surprised at his dismissive response and that he did not “join” me in my delight. His judgment was palpable, his dismissive emotion latent and in the background, his body standing there, his affect said everything; “I see you, but you will not connect with me... if you do, I might have to feel something unwanted and I can’t afford that.” Or something to that affect.

Any way you interpret his behavior, the truth is, something ended up inside of me, something of his, which I cannot easily dismiss. What he gave to me because his unwillingness or inability to feel was his absence; subtle, painful and without his presence, participating in making sense of what transpired between us, a seed of conflict remains. With him, my father, I cannot rest. *This seed of his discontent lies dormant within me and when watered with my resentment breaks my heart one more time.*

There is something in the interplay between absence and presence that informs us of what it means to father. The old man did not mean to hurt me. He was just being himself; alone, separate, and unable risk the feelings, the emotions that would allow him to connect. His inability to show up for the simple affirmation of my delight in driving this “new” car was displaced with an inadvertent disregard that did not serve to bring us together but to move us apart.

And if this minor infraction in our relationship was to be processed in a way that brought us closer together, it would have to be done by me. I can hear you the reader; “why didn’t you tell him his actions hurt your feelings” or something to that effect. Well, I did, “don’t be so sensitive” was his response. I retreated to the background like that set of worn tires, near exhaustion.

—Fathering Journal, Timothy Dukes



DR. TIMOTHY DUKES

DrTimothyDukes.com | Sanctuary | Reflect | Balding Tires | 20230924

Image courtesy of: [Angelo SARTORI](#) [@angelosartori](#)

The Tim Dukes Method provides an opportunity for self-reflective individuals to cultivate the capacity to receive into consciousness hidden aspects of the self, claiming your unique gifts – ensuring that today’s brilliance successfully transitions into tomorrow’s wisdom. The Tim Dukes Method is designed and implemented by Dr. Timothy Dukes for determined creatives to ensure long-term viability — as a continuing investment in the well-being of yourself, family, organizations, culture, society, and the Earth itself.