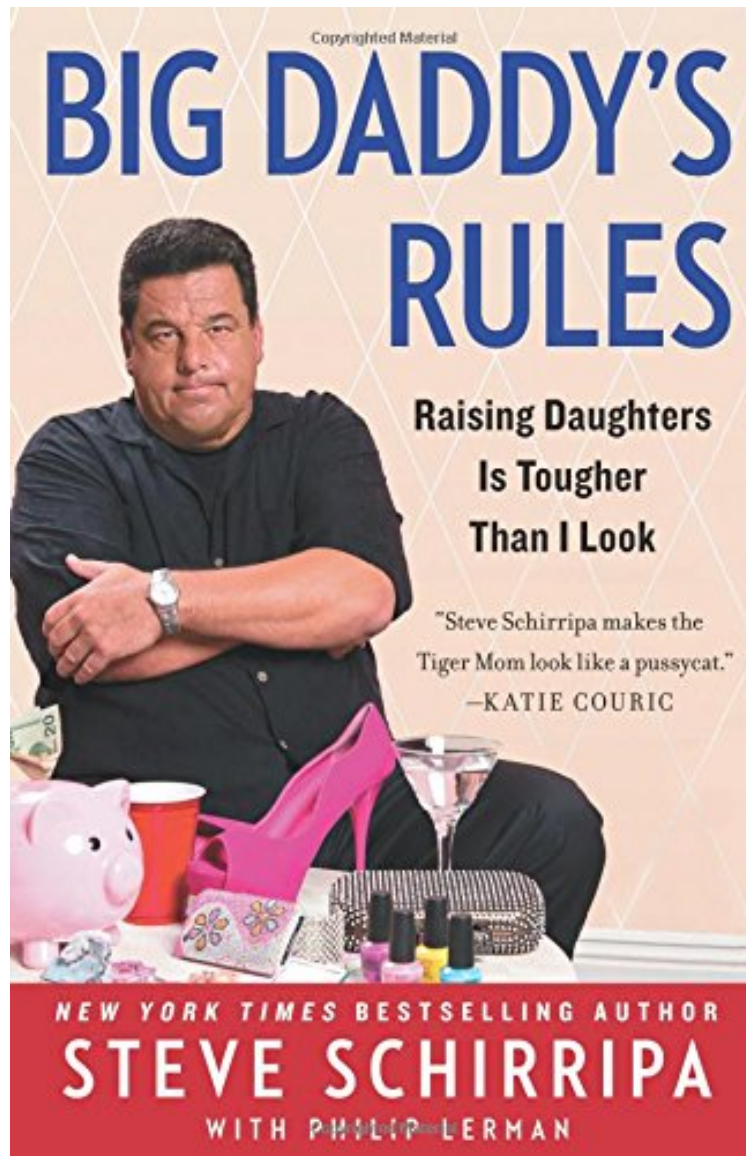


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## Big Daddy's Rules: Raising Daughters Is Tougher Than I Look

Steve Schirripa

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**Steve Schirripa : Big Daddy's Rules: Raising Daughters Is Tougher Than I Look** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Big Daddy's Rules: Raising Daughters Is Tougher Than I Look:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Truer than life and just as relevant By Jim Blatchley I really liked it because the rules he has for his daughters in the home and away were very close to the way we raised our 3 daughters. His ideas were so 1960s for us ,and it made us laugh out loud. I almost could close my eyes and hear my husband and

me talk to them (sometimes in raised voices also) trying to get them to understand what was expected. One of the things we didn't do was say the 4 letter words, but of course it was the early 60s and it wasn't as accepted then as it is now. We loved them enough to say a loud no to the things that we knew were not right. They are now in their late 40s and early 50s and are wonderful women who absolutely know that we, like Steve Schirripa, only wanted them to be what they are now. Their children are raised with those same values. I think he wrote a funny, great book which I thoroughly enjoyed. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Pedro Portes Fun read 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good book, fun to read for me... By TD Bauer Great Book. I have four step daughters and six step grand daughters... I knew exactly where Steve Schirripa was coming from when I wrote this book. Fun read.

From world-famous tough guy and New York Times bestselling author Steve Schirripa—a winning mix of wisecracks and wise words on the hardest job of all: being a father. What happens when a world-famous tough guy takes on the toughest job of all—becoming a father? Welcome to the world of the Big Daddy. Steve Schirripa is known for his star turns on *The Sopranos* and *The Secret Life of the American Teenager*, but in his own life he's the father of two daughters of his own—and a self-confessed human volcano. In *Big Daddy's Rules*, Schirripa tells all and brings a welcome dose of old-school advice (and new-school humor) to the parenting wars. “You're not there to be a friend,” Schirripa says bluntly. “You're there to be a dad.” Schirripa serves up the heartwarming and hilarious stories of how he and his wife navigated the wild waters of parenthood: from the moment the tough guy's heart melted when he held his first-born in his arms to what he felt (and did) the time he caught someone looking at his teenage daughter's butt. He lays out all the rules for being a Big Daddy—someone who is strong, devoted, and always looking out for his kids' best interests, even when that means not being the coolest dad on the block. Overprotective? Maybe. Willing to tone it down? Absolutely not. *Big Daddy's Rules* is filled with tales of his over-the-top yet heartfelt parenting style—confronting bad teachers, staring down boyfriends, and explaining just how crazy you're allowed to get if you catch your kid drinking (hint: really, really crazy). With a mixture of street-smart bravado and self-effacing humor, Schirripa pulls no punches as he delivers his no-bull stance on what it takes to raise kids today. He's uproariously funny, but Schirripa isn't just cracking jokes here; this is also a call to action for dads to return to common-sense parenting and reclaim their role as protector and holder of values to be passed down.

“Steve Schirripa makes the Tiger Mom look like a pussycat.” (Katie Couric) “If you read one hilarious book about parenting make it Schirripa's – or he will come down on you like a ton of... don't you walk away from me mister... get back... oh f\*\*k it, just read the book.” (Jon Stewart) “Steve Schirripa's book “*Big Daddy's Rules*” is wonderful and might help lots of parents be brave enough to put their foot down. This book is funny and insightful and I loved it.” (Whoopie Goldberg) “I read the book like we agreed, Steve. Have to admit it's funny, insightful and unique. Now keep your end of the bargain. Come over my house and yell at my kids. Please.” (Ray Romano) “I'm not endorsing this great book by Steve Schirripa, about being the father of two daughters, because I was intimidated. Well, not completely. OK, mostly.” (Jim Gaffigan) “There aren't many men who can be smart, tough, tender, witty and insightful all in perfect measure, and who can also write so well. That would define the inimitable Mr. Steve Schirripa!” (Richard Belzer) “Listen, I know Steve. Steve is actually crazy. But his kids are nicer than almost any adult I know. So I thought, maybe it's a good crazy. Then I read this book. No, he's actually just crazy. But he figured out how to make crazy work for him and his kids. Which is more than I can say for the rest of us.” (Joe Rogan) About the Author Steve Schirripa was a breakout star on *The Sopranos*. He is the New York Times bestselling author of *A Goomba's Guide to Life* and currently stars on *The Secret Life of the American Teenager*. Schirripa also hosts *Investigation Discovery's Karma's a Bitch!* Schirripa lives in New York with his wife and two daughters. Philip Lerman is the author of *Dadditude: How a Real Man Became a Real Dad* and the coauthor of several books, including *No Mercy*. Lerman is the former co-executive producer of *America's Most Wanted* and former national editor of *USA TODAY*. Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. *Big Daddy's Rules* 1 THAT'S MISTER DAD TO YOU Sometimes being a dad is like watching a ping-pong match. I'm in the dining room the other day, and my wife and one of my girls start up on one of those things mothers and daughters seem to be able to get into with no end in sight: You're not going out in that skirt. It's too short. No it isn't. Yes it is. But I wore it last week. I don't care, it's too short. But Gina is wearing a shorter skirt. I'm not Gina's mother. I said you can't go out like that. Back and forth. I try to hold my tongue and let them work it out. That lasts about no seconds. I explode, like the firecrackers we used to toss in the garbage cans on Bath Avenue when I was growing up in Brooklyn. As loud as I can, with my face getting as red as a can of tomato sauce, I make my point clear: “Did you not hear your mother! Did she not just tell you you're not going out of the house with your ass hanging out the back of your skirt! What part of ‘you're not going out of the house with your ass hanging out the back of your skirt’ do you not understand?” They both roll their eyes. They've heard this all before. I take a little pause for effect—all those acting lessons weren't for nothing, you know—and then I ratchet it up a notch. “I don't care who else wears what, anywhere else in the world, I don't care whether you think this skirt is appropriate, and I don't care about anything, to be honest, other than when your mother tells you to change your skirt,

you change your skirt. Does anyone here have a problem with that?" At this point, they're looking at each other. It's a bonding moment for the two of them: Oh, well, I guess Dad's at it again. No one gets upset. No one talks back. They smirk, and they wait for the storm to pass. And then my daughter goes back into her room and changes her skirt. Welcome to the world of the Big Daddy. Listen. Everywhere you look these days, somebody's making fun of dads. You turn on the TV on Father's Day, and they're showing all the daddy movies, and in one after another, the dad is an idiot—he can't make breakfast, he can't make lunch, he can't get piss out of a boot if the instructions are written on the heel. He sure as hell can't change a diaper, dress his kids, or give his teenage daughters advice on anything beyond how to buy car insurance, and even for that he needs help from a fucking gecko that sounds like Keith Richards. Well, I say, enough is enough. I'd like to form a club just for fathers. Specifically fathers of daughters. There would be lots of overstuffed leather chairs, wood paneling, dim lights. The works. A good space for sitting around and talking and getting some shit off our chests. I don't mean all the time, of course. Just during the commercials. And instead of a THIS BUD'S FOR YOU sign, there would be a burnt-wood sign, hanging over the good Scotch, reading: WHOEVER SAYS WE DON'T KNOW WHAT THE FUCK WE'RE TALKING ABOUT DOESN'T KNOW WHAT THE FUCK THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT Because all of this talk about what idiots dads are, and how we have to learn to be a pal to our kids, and how we have to learn to be more like moms—I've had it up to here with all of that. I say it's time for the Big Daddys to take over. I gotta say, as the father of two beautiful young daughters, I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth. I know for most guys that means you've got Lou Gehrig's disease, but I don't mean it that way. I mean yeah, being the father of girls is a kind of illness, in its own way—since any guy who has tried to live in a house with a wife and two daughters is, without any doubt, going to go certifiably nuts. But I wouldn't have it any other way. I play this father, Leo, on a TV show called The Secret Life of the American Teenager. He's the father of a nice teenage boy who gets into more trouble than any kid you've ever known (if you're lucky). A girl he knows gets pregnant, he starts dating her and decides he's going to marry her, then he gets another girl pregnant and decides he's gonna marry her instead. And this is a kid who's barely started shaving. Leo is the owner of a successful meat company. He deals with all of his kid's problems intelligently, calmly but firmly guiding his child through the rough waters of life. In other words, he's nothing like me. I will say this from the get-go: When it comes to being a dad, I think staying calm is overrated. I got no patience for a lot of what I see going on around me, with my kids, with other kids, and especially with other parents. And I'm not shy about saying so. Sometimes, very loudly. The occasional dish does get broken in the course of certain discussions. When people tell me that I'm a hothead, I have one response: You got a problem with that? Let me give you an example. A few years back I'm in a restaurant in the Village with my family. It's a nice restaurant; white tablecloths, waiters who are all out-of-work actors waiting for their big break. They don't just tell you what's on the menu, they perform it. (And why is it the more expensive the restaurant, the more they feel they have to tell you every ingredient that went into every dish? "The salmon is braised in a smoked honey-cilantro vinaigrette with thyme, corn nuts, pickled snail tongues, and a hint of dog's breath." Just give me the goddamn dish. I don't have to know its life story. You go into an Italian restaurant, you don't get that. "Would you like the veal piccata?" "Can you tell me how it's prepared?" "Yeah, we cook it, then we bring it out to the table." "Sounds good. I'll have that.") Anyway, so we're at this really nice restaurant, me and the family. My older daughter is about sixteen at the time. The waiter has finally gotten through his performance of "Specials of the Day"—beautiful job, I have to say, his description of the she-crab soup brought us to tears—and we're just settling in, and I notice there's this big-mouth guy sitting across from us. The restaurant's tiny, not much bigger than my living room, and he's talking like he's giving the State of the Union address. Sitting with two other guys, and the big blowhard is going on and on, and he's kind of irritating me, so the manager, who I know, I said to him, "What's up with this guy? Who is this guy?" I said, "Tell him to shut up, because he's disrupting everybody's meal." But the guy doesn't shut up. So later, I get the check, and my daughter gets up to walk out and passes the guy, and he leans way out of his seat to look at her butt. And he passes a remark to the guy he's sitting with. Mount Saint Helens didn't erupt so quickly. "Are you kidding me?" I scream at the guy. "Are you kidding me?" Now the whole restaurant is quiet. You could hear a pin drop. I can tell I've got the guy's attention because it's the first time he's shut up all night. "She's sixteen years old," I said. "That's my daughter. She's sixteen years old and you want to look at her ass? Is that what you want to do? You want to look at my daughter's ass? You ruin everybody's goddamn dinner, and now you want to look at my daughter's ass?" I told him and his two buddies to come outside. Now, I'm fifty years old at the time, and fat, and these guys are half my age and half my weight, and my wife is telling me to calm down. I told her, go get in the cab, because when they come out I'm gonna fight them, and I'm probably gonna get beat up but I'm gonna fight 'em because that's how mad this guy got me. My wife and kids just smiled and shrugged. They got in the cab, and the driver flipped the meter, and they sat and waited and started talking about something else. They're used to this with me. The three guys never came out, and eventually I got in the cab with them, and we headed out. "Having fun, Dad?" my daughter said to me as the cab pulled away from the curb. "Just watching out for you, sweetheart," I said. And I was. The point is, everybody thinks they have the answer to how to be a good parent. Here's mine: Everybody's gonna make mistakes. Kids don't come with an instruction manual. So if you're gonna make mistakes, at least make them your own way. Me, I don't use the word "parenting." It's not a verb. It's a noun. You're a parent. A mom or a dad.

You're not there to be a friend to your kid. I see these moms, they think they can be a friend to their daughters. A woman I know, I kid you not, she and her teenage daughter went off to get tattoos together. This is not a message you want to give to a teenage kid. If she's gonna get tattoos when her mom is right there, what's she gonna do when you're not around? Kids have to rebel. It's their nature. It's their job. Your job is to give them something to rebel against. What does that kid with the tattoos have to do in order to piss her mother off, shoot somebody? Maybe after the tattoos they can go for a nice mother-daughter manicure, pedicure, and bank robbery. How to Be a Big Daddy My kids know that for better or for worse—and sometimes for a little of both—I am going to be Enormously Present. The Big Daddy, in all senses of the word. For me, it's not enough to stand on the sidelines and watch your wife raise your kids. For me, it's all about getting in the game. That's Big Daddy rule number one. Get off the goddamn bench. Because look. I give my kids a good life. Growing up poor like I did, not knowing where the next meal was coming from, you decide that your kids are never going to go without good food. Growing up with cardboard in your sneakers (when you even had sneakers), you decide that your kids are never going to go without nice shoes. Growing up without anything, you want to give your kids everything. Do I give them too much? Probably. They have a nice life, and I'm happy that they have a nice life. But I am not above threatening to take it all away. I've said it so many times, they could probably recite it themselves, like Don Corleone's speech in *The Godfather*. I've said—and not, you may guess by now, in the quietest of tones—you like this life? The nice apartment, the nice clothes, the nice vacations, the Knicks tickets, the whole nine yards? You screw up and it all goes away. The first time you come home with liquor on your breath, that's the last time you come home with liquor on your breath. You wanna see all this disappear? Let me catch you with drugs in your purse. Let me find out you cheated on a test or ditched school. You wanna see magic? I can make this whole thing disappear. Just give me the excuse. Now go do what your mother says. I mean, it's no "make him an offer he can't refuse," but it's the best I got. Now, I'll admit, it's probably a lot easier if you're raising boys. Boys, you know what you're doing. They're pretty straightforward. You toss them a ball, you teach them how to watch for the pulling guards on the offensive line to know which way the halfback is going to run, you roughhouse with them a little bit, and when the time comes you give them money for condoms. But if boys are like a *Three Stooges* movie, girls are a goddamn mystery novel. Not that I'm a big reader of mystery novels, but I'm sure if I was I'd figure them out about as easily as I can figure out daughters. Nevertheless, I do think I've learned a thing or two from raising two wonderful girls. I'll tell you how I did it, and I'll also tell you how some friends of mine raised their kids. Because it's not as if I got all the answers, or any of them for that matter, but I have learned a lot from listening to guys who are a little smarter than me. Or at least a little less clueless. I'll try to include some helpful hints on how to deal with daughters, like what to do if they want to shave their heads (hint: No.), what to do if they want to date some high school dropout with a dagger tattoo on his face (hint: No way, what are you kidding me?), and what to do if she wants to pierce her nose (hint: Give me a fucking break). Don't get me wrong. I'm no expert and I'm not trying to be. This is just the way I think, in my words, about my life with my kids. Did I do everything right? Not a chance in hell. Does anybody out there have a better idea? Most likely. My daughters are terrific, and they seem to be on a good path, knock wood. And if I had anything to do with that, then maybe I did something right. Or maybe I just got lucky. And maybe that's the point: If we all share our stories about raising girls, maybe we'll figure out how to stretch our luck. Look, you're talking to a guy who worked in Vegas for twenty years. I've spent a lot of time in casinos, and if I learned anything there, I learned this: You can't beat the house. But if you play your cards right, you can improve your odds a little bit. This book is the story of how I played mine.