

I'm in the air again as I write this column on a laptop computer. Today, I'm flying home from Portland, Ore. Staring out the small window at the celestial clouds, I realize I've logged more travel miles this year than any other in my life. Planes, trains and automobiles, indeed.

But I have no complaints. I enjoy the road. I like visiting new places and meeting new people. It's one of my favorite parts of the job.

But I miss my family when I'm gone. I long to return home to be with my wife, two boys and dog. Home is where my heart is.

Earlier this year, my wife, Mindy, gave me an iPod for my birthday. For a man who loves music, it was the perfect gift.

I was the proverbial kid in the candy store when I went to the iTunes Store to buy and download music for my new toy. I scoured the music lists for sentimental songs from my youth. One of the first tunes I downloaded was "Cats in the Cradle" by Harry Chapin. I always liked the song, but I hadn't heard it in years.

The first time I listened to "Cats in the Cradle" on my iPod, I was startled by the song's lyrics. Chapin tells a story about a dad who's too busy with his career to spend time with his son. Chapin sings, "When you comin' home dad?/I don't know when/But we'll get together then son/You know we'll have a good time then."

The roles are reversed in the second part of the song. The grown-up son is too busy to spend time with his retired and lonely father. At the song's end, the dad realizes he made a mistake in raising his son. In Chapin's lyrics, the dad laments, "... it occurred to me, he'd grown up just like me. My boy was just like me."

The song's lyrics hit home harder now that I'm the father of two young boys. And I don't ever want to tell them that I'm too busy for them, although I must confess I have on occasion.

I know many of you can relate to my plight. Your career — whether you're a golf course superintendent, a general manager or an owner — is demanding and time-consuming. If you have a spouse and children, you know how

'When You Comin' Home, Dad?'

BY LARRY AYLWARD



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difficult it is to balance your career life with your family life.

There's nothing wrong with loving what you do for a living. The person who loves his job is truly blessed. Just don't forget to love your loved ones. And more importantly, don't forget to *show* your love by spending quality time with them.

Balancing career and family takes work. Hard work. The ones who do it well know all about the art of mustering up a second wind.

Paul B. Latshaw, the certified superintendent of Muirfield Village Golf Club in Dublin, Ohio, once told me what it was like to be the son of Paul R. Latshaw, one of the most career-minded and successful superintendents to walk the planet. The elder Latshaw worked at some of the country's finest golf courses, where long hours and dedication were prerequisites for the jobs.

But the elder Latshaw made time for his son after a hard day's work. Paul B. says he remembers his dad coming home after a 12-hour workday, tired nonetheless, and honoring his son's request to toss the football around.

"I played high school football, and he never missed a game," Paul B. says of his father. "We also hunted together. He made time for the things that really mattered."

My plane is landing now. It has been a long flight, and I'm beat. I'll get home about 7:30. I'd love to just kick back in the recliner and relax.

But two little boys, full of life, will be waiting for me. And they'll want to wrestle or play hide-and-seek or just goof around.

Tired or not, I'll be ready for them when I walk through the door.

You know we *will* have a good time then.

Aylward can be reached at laylward@questex.com.