

Tim Allen

The star talks about fatherhood, his new series, and what he ribs Tom Hanks about

“I DO A LOT OF family shows,” says Tim Allen, who, 12 years after signing off from *Home Improvement*, is back on TV in *Last Man Standing* (ABC, Tuesdays, 8 p.m. ET). “You’d think I’d be in a much darker comedy, but I want families to be able to watch and not have to explain to a kid what something means.” Allen, 58, shares both his lighter and darker sides with **Erin Hill**.

PARADE You have two daughters, ages 21 and 2, and on *Last Man Standing* you’re father to three daughters. Have you brought any of your experiences to the show?

Nothing’s as easy as it is on a sitcom. Issues that we take care of in 20 minutes on the show can stretch out over years in real families. I like to have a relatable baseline in the story so people go, “Yeah, I’ve been there,” and then we get to laugh about it.

Your *Home Improvement* family was full of boys. Which is easier?

In my experience, it’s all wonderful with girls until about 16. Around that time, boys kind of calm down and start focusing

their testosterone. Girls get a little challenging, especially for fathers.

How is fatherhood the second time around?

I was gone so much in my first marriage. I love the moments when I engage with my youngest daughter now. It’s not my thing to sit on the ground and play tea party, but I’ll do it because it’s a moment that will stick with me forever.

How do you spend your Sundays?

My wife and I will go to church; then, if we’re lucky, we’ll get a sitter and play golf. We have a nice early dinner, and I end up watching TiVo’d *Meet the Press* or Fox or CNN.

That’s a great Sunday.



What’s it like to know that so many men were brought to tears by *Toy Story 3*?

I’m one of them! Tom Hanks and I saw the film, and I said, “Good Lord, this thing is sad.” They added that dance thing at the end so people would leave crying *and* laughing.

Do you get bragging rights because your character, Buzz Lightyear, outsells Woody in action figures?

Oh, I tell Hanks that all the time. He’s a good friend, and I will start a conversation with “I’m still out-selling you 100,000 to 1.”

In 1978, you were arrested on drug charges and spent two years in jail. What was the

biggest lesson you learned during that time?

It’s not something I prescribe for anybody, but hitting bottom allows you to figure out what kind of person you are and whether you like that person. As I got older, especially after prison, I developed some self-esteem.

“MY COMEDY IS A COPING MECHANISM FOR DEALING WITH PAIN AND ALSO HOW I ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO KEEP GOING.”

Did you take any souvenirs from the *Home Improvement* set?

I’ve got the entire Tool Time set in my shop. The space shuttle crew did a show for us, and I have the letter from NASA. I’m a space freak, so that’s my favorite relic.

You’re known as a pretty handy guy both on and off screen. Is there anything you can’t fix around the house?

I’m not real good with plumbing. It’s simple in theory—it’s just water, pressure, and pipes. But I really can’t understand it!

What would people be surprised to know about you?

On a philosophical level, I’m very religious. I call myself an intellectual Christian. I’ve been seeking answers and information about Christianity, as well as Judaism, Islam, and Hinduism, since my father died [in a car crash, when Allen was 11], trying to explain life and death. My brother put it best a long time ago when he said, “You’re a lot more perceptive than I ever imagined.”



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