

25 Things a Daughter Needs From Her Dad

As you probably know, I am a first-time author. The part you may not know, however, is that I *never* set out to be an author. That part just kind of happened.

One thing I was clear about from the start was that I wanted to write a book that would be a field manual for dads. I hoped it would appeal to a wide range of men, from those who like to read all the way to those who don't care too much for books or have the time but want answers that yield positive, guaranteed results in relating to their daughters.

And the best part now is that I have the privilege of hearing feedback from dads who are putting things into action and seeing a significant turn around in their relationship with their daughters! Three words: *All worth it!*

When the book title was finally selected—*Dad, Here's What I Really Need from You: A Guide for Connecting with Your Daughter's Heart*—I decided to do a little of my own field research, a bit of data collection, I guess you could say. I started by asking this question to as many girls and women as I could find:

What do you really need from your dad?

Then I added a short addendum to my request:

"This is your opportunity to use your voice to help dads across America by answering this question and telling me the top five things you really need from your dad. Feel free to pass this on to any women you know who may want to help me gather information."

Not only did the responses start pouring in, but surprisingly

women took me up on my suggestion and started sending the questionnaire to their friends and family. I honestly hadn't expected that level of enthusiastic response!

The youngest participant was 9 years old while the oldest was 89, again reflecting the relevance of this topic to girls and women across the lifespan. This question seemed to spark something in the hearts of females that spurred them to want their voices to be heard.

So here is a profound look inside the inner world of women. I trust that you'll hear their hearts and not just see a list of entitled requests from demanding females.

The truth is that these aren't just wants. These are needs. Their honest, heartfelt feedback is here to let you know what girls and women are *really* thinking and what they are *really* longing for from their dads.

Here are the 25 most-mentioned things that a daughter *really* needs from her dad:

1. **Time** ("To show interest and involvement in my life," "To be available").
2. **Affirmation** ("Approval," "Praise," "Hear him say out loud, 'I love you'").
3. **Affection** ("Hugs," "Physical touch").
4. **Unconditional love** ("For who I am regardless of my failures").
5. **Apologies.**
6. **Be proud of me** ("To know I'm not a disappointment to him," "No judgment," "Less criticism," "Faith in me").
7. **Tell me I'm beautiful** ("Compliment me, especially about my looks").

8. Talk to me and open up about himself, his pain, his faults, his hopes ("Let me see that he is human, that he fails, that he makes mistakes, and then show me how to make it right," "Time alone where I get to know him and his childhood").

9. Pursue me ("Desire to get to know me," "Interactive conversation where he is asking me questions about myself," "To actively seek me out and find out what I am doing, what I am interested in, WHO I am").

10. Prayers.

11. To work on his temper so I can feel safe ("Not to crush my spirit").

12. Not to change me ("To let me be me," "Be accepted for myself—not for what I did or failed to do").

13. Honesty ("I need him to be honest with himself. When he's honest with himself, it frees him to be honest with me").

14. Just listen.

15. Guidance.

16. Protection.

17. Sense of humor.

18. Teach me about things.

19. Be an adventurer ... with me.

20. Instead of not being there, please be there ("Instead of handing me money, ask to come with me and take me shopping or out to lunch").

21. Tell me you love being my dad.

22. Believe in me.

23. Never give up on our family.

24. Show me how a real man treats a woman.

25. Support my ideas and dreams.

Raw. Vulnerable. Honest. And every single response comes from a daughter's heart longing for connection and relationship *with* dad coupled with love and affirmation *from* dad.

My deep and passionate desire is for dads across America and the world to step up and step into their roles as fathers. We can't go one more day without every dad being all that his daughter needs him to be in her life. Because a daughter who knows she is loved and adored by her dad will pass along that same gift to the next generation.

Dad, I implore you to take five things from this list, the ones that most strongly resonate with your core values, and put them into action right away.

Be the dad your daughter *needs* you to be ... today.

Dr. Michelle Watson has a clinical counseling practice in Portland, Oregon, and has served in that role for the past 17 years. She is founder of The Abba Project, a 9-month group forum that is designed to equip dads with daughters ages 13 to 30 to dial in with more intention and consistency, and has recently released her first book entitled, *Dad, Here's What I Really Need from You: A Guide for Connecting with Your Daughter's Heart*. She invites you to visit for more information and to sign up for her weekly Dad-Daughter Friday blogs, where she provides practical tools so that every dad in America can become the action hero they want to be and their daughters need them to be. You can also follow or send feedback on Facebook and Twitter.

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