

25 Things NOT to Say to Your Daughter, Ever

I've had the privilege over the last five and a half years of fine-tuning my understanding of men through The Abba Project (if you're new to the conversation, this is the dads' group I lead in Portland, Oregon).

As a result, I believe I've grown to understand and appreciate where you as dads are coming from. The truth is that I really enjoy hearing honestly from fathers about what it's like to be in your shoes, especially as fathers to daughters.

Through my conversations, what I hear repeatedly from men is one of two responses:

1. Tell it to me straight with as few words as possible (. get to the point!)
2. Tell me what to do to fix it.

In an attempt to prove that I, as a woman, can speak in a way that is straightforward with minimal verbiage, here is my bullet point list of some exact, specific things that you as a dad should never, ever, under any circumstance say to your daughter. EVER.

Why? Because what you say will echo in her head and heart for all eternity and she will never forget what you say about her, what you believe about her, what you see when you look at her, and what you tell her is true about her. (And sadly, I've heard many of these examples in real life.)

So with as few words as possible, here's a list of what *NOT* to say to your daughter:

1. You are one high maintenance girl.
2. You have always been the most needy of all our kids.

3. Why do you always make mountains out of molehills?
4. You look like you've gained weight (never give her a nickname that emphasizes her size).
5. You got yourself into this mess so don't come running to me ... you have no one to blame but yourself.
6. Stop crying ... You're being a big baby.
7. Do you know how utterly ridiculous and nonsensical you sound right now?
8. Pull yourself together and when you can talk rationally and clearly, then come talk to me.
9. Go talk to your mother ... She'll understand you.
10. I gave up trying with you a long time ago.
11. How on earth do you ever expect a man to want to be with you when you act like this?
12. You are wearing me out. I don't know how much more of you I can take.
13. You drive me crazy.
14. When are you ever going to start acting your age?
15. You are a spoiled brat.
16. I have no idea how you have any friends with the way you act ... the real you comes out at home.
17. You are a selfish #%*... can't you ever think of anyone but yourself?
18. In my house you will act the way I tell you to act.
19. Shape up or ship out.

20. Do you want a taste of your own medicine?
21. What did I ever do wrong to have to deal with a daughter like you?
22. You are a big disappointment to me.
23. You are a disgrace to this family.
24. God must regret having made you.
25. Why can't you be more like your brother/sister?

I know we're all human and say things we don't mean. If you've ever said any of these things, go today and make amends with your daughter. It's never too late to make things right.

You may think that she's forgotten what you said because it was a long time ago. I assure you she hasn't. **Humble yourself, go now, and ask forgiveness. It will release both of you.**

Let today be the day where the words you speak to her from this day forward are only life-breathing and not akin to anything in the above list.

And for the record, this is the first time you've heard me say that failing to say or do something means that you're at the top of the class!

(Stay tuned for the counter position titled: "25 Things to **ALWAYS** Say To Your Daughter")

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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