

3 Little Words That Will Change Your Daughter's Life (And They're Not I Love You)

My dad, like every dad, has things he's done right and things he's done wrong when it comes to parenting.

There are things he's proud of (especially the things that were 180 degrees different from what his dad modeled to him) and things he'd rather forget.

But from my vantage point as a daughter there is *one thing* in particular that my dad did right, *one thing* that stands out among the rest, *one thing* that has touched my heart deeply and has gone a long way to remedy the mistakes, blunders, and the wishes for do-overs.

It's a little three-word response that my dad has said so many times over the years that I've lost count by now. They are simply:

"Anything for you."

I wish I could play you a sound bite so you could hear his tone of voice when saying these words, but I assure you that they're *always* said in a really kind way. I don't know how he's pulled it off for decades now, but this is truly where he's gotten it right time and again.

- These words are *grace*.
- These words are *mercy*.
- These words are *generous*.
- These words are *unmerited favor*.
- These words are *good for my heart*. Really good. The hot-fudge-with-whipped-cream-and-sprinkles kind of good.

I can't explain how three little words can change everything,

but they do.

I'm guessing there are times my dad truly hasn't wanted to step up to the plate and give of himself to meet my needs, but he doesn't let me know that part. He just says these three magic words and gives them as a gift to me.

And because my "emergencies" and his schedule don't always line up, this is definitely a priority thing on his part. Whether it was my broken down car on the side of the road, or my water heater that went out at 9 pm. and meant he had to drive over late at night when he'd rather be winding down, or the times he's insisted on mowing my lawn despite his hip causing him pain and being in need of surgery. He has cared about the things, little and big, that matter to me.

You may not know this but my dad literally lacked a role model in the fathering department. His dad was an alcoholic and abandoned the family when he was only seven or eight years old. Suffice it to say, being a father was the last thing my dad had a clue about, especially being the father to *four girls!* But somehow he learned (and was willing to learn) from watching other dads, which proves that any dad can turn things around in his generation regardless of the template he's been given.

Truth be told, sometimes life has a way of communicating and reinforcing a message to us women telling us that we ask too much. For me personally (when this view is in the forefront), I wind up believing that I need to prove that I'm tough and can navigate things on my own without asking anyone for help, let alone my dad.

But this really isn't healthy. Or good. Or realistic.

It's a paradigm that spells disaster because we're created to need connection and relationship. Simon and Garfunkel understood this concept in spades as they captured the heartache of someone who is closed off from love in their 1965

hit song *I am a Rock*:

"I am a rock, I am an island. And a rock feels no pain. And an island never cries."

Bottom line:

1. Relationships dispel isolation.

2. It doesn't work to be self-sufficient where we pretend to be without needs.

Dad, you have the power and the privilege to meet your daughter's needs, whether or not they seem legitimate or of high priority to you. Listen to what she says and then offer to come alongside and offer your help.

Why not take the step today and add this life-changing vocal triad to your repertoire.

You'll get to watch the core of your daughter's soul take flight as she hears you respond to her convenient and inconvenient requests with these three little yet BIG words:

"Anything for you."

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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