

5 Easy Steps to Relate to Your Mysterious Daughter

I often hear fathers tell me that their daughters are complicated and complex, confusing and unpredictable. Believe it or not, I have discovered that we girls are not as hard to understand as we may seem!

My decoding strategy for you is coming to you straight from *the one Man* in all of history who always got it right when it came to relationships. Of course you know who I'm talking about: Jesus. I figure there's nothing better than learning from the best.

Here are five “easy” steps to decoding and relating to your daughter, especially during those times when things are emotionally intense.

(And if you don't want to read further and just want a one-step plan, I would say to be gentle, soft and calm. And yes, those *are* manly words, I assure you, because only a strong man can accomplish this. It's hard!).

Here goes: There were two sisters, Martha and Mary, and they were close, personal friends of Jesus. He knew them, and they knew Him. For better or worse.

Let's pick up the story (from Luke 10:38-42, if you want to look it up later) where Martha is overly reactive, super stressed and basically freaking out.

If you can relate to experiencing any of those realities in your home, listen to what Jesus (with his male energy) did to enter the fray with his frazzled female friend.

1. He lets her vent to Him while He listens to all of it.

Even when she dramatically tells Jesus that he “doesn't

care" (false assumptions always take place during meltdowns), she continues by crying about having to do everything "by myself." And if that wasn't enough, she then barks at Jesus and demands that He tell her sister to help her. Surprisingly, He doesn't lecture, but listens and essentially absorbs her intensity by being her sounding board.

2. He says her name twice, gently and lovingly.

There's something calming when any of us hears our name. And for us girls, it's grounding for us to be spoken to by name. If you speak your daughter's name with love in your tone and in a gentle way, she will come toward you—maybe not right away, but it is a powerful, healing strategy that works.

3. He sits with her in her emotional reality.

Notice that He doesn't try and talk her out of what she's feeling or try to get her to think rationally. No lecture. No criticism. Jesus knows that she couldn't hear it anyway while she is worked up. So He simply stays with her, looks at her, validates her and puts words to what she's feeling, calling it "anxious" and "troubled: (Luke 10:41). He tenderly names her emotions. No judgment.

4. He highlights all that is on her life plate.

As girls, we are wired to multi-task. That's why we can talk on the phone, paint our nails, watch a show and do homework all at the same time. Yet all of a sudden we reach our max, and then comes the explosion. Again, this is where we need gentle grace, not power positions. Jesus just told Martha that he knew she had "many things" (Luke 10:41). going on, leading to her melt down. How kind of him to notice. If you validate all that is pressing in on your daughter, your words will go long and far to make her feel heard and understood.

5. He directs her to focus on one thing.

Jesus tells her “But one thing is needed” (Luke 10:42). The implication is that it’s about focusing on Him as the one thing rather than all the needs around her. When we girls get overwhelmed with the much, we need gentle, supportive guidance to take it one thing at a time. Breaking it down into bite-size pieces is immensely helpful when we’re breaking down.

Summing up: When your daughter is melting down, sit alongside her and listen to her vent, move towards her and lovingly say her name. Tell her that you understand that she is “worried and upset.” Let her know you do see that she has a lot on her plate and assist in helping her to focus on one thing.

I know it’s easier said than done, but these five things will make all the difference in the eye of the storm when you are trying to keep up with her complexity. And after the storm has passed, the main thing your daughter will remember is that you, Dad, were there in it with her. {eoa}

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