

5 Important Points When Talking to Your Daughter About Sex

Sometimes you see things that make you sick to your stomach. That was the case several years ago while I was leading a week-long camping trip.

I was leaving the dining hall when I heard a group of giddy girls talking. Amid the giggles, I heard one say to her friend about a certain boy, "He was totally looking at your [butt]." The friend didn't appear to be embarrassed or feel uncomfortable in any way. In fact, she looked as though she were flattered and reveling in the attention. It would probably be helpful to mention that she was 12 years old.

The culture of sex hits our daughters early, giving them a skewed view and reducing them to body parts. One veteran pornographer, whom I will not name, stated that girls these days come to the set "porn ready." Another famous porn star, whom I will also not name, consistently had 13-year-old girls describe her as their role model.

It may be tempting to try and avoid awkward conversations or think that it is a mom's job to talk to your daughter about sex. But our daughters need our guidance. They need to hear from their fathers.

Here are five important points when talking to your daughter about sex:

1. Get comfortable with being uncomfortable. Talking about sex with your daughter will be as uncomfortable as you make it. If you are at ease with the topic, it will go a long way towards putting her at ease. A daughter talking to her dad about sex may always feel awkward to her, but don't tip-toe around it.

Just dive in without fear. Don't let her discomfort make you shy. Using humor or remarking about her discomfort can also lighten the tension. It's also best to have multiple conversations with as little formality as possible. Talk and teach, but be sure to ask her questions and then listen.

2. Start the conversation before puberty hits. You may not think she's ready, but in a world saturated with sex, your daughter needs your help to make sense of it. If she doesn't get her information from you, she will find it somewhere else. Unfortunately, whether she identifies it or not, she has been told lies about herself her entire life.

3. Her true identity vs. the culture of sex. The images she has observed in the media have communicated that her value comes from her sexuality. If she's sexy, she has value, and if not, then she doesn't because "sexy" looks a certain way. There's pressure to look like Victoria's Secret models and assume a sexual persona or risk fading into obscurity. Wrapped up in these confusing messages, young girls feel a sense of shame they can't identify while trying to meet a cultural expectation they know deep down is wrong. So they try and walk both sides of the fence. They engage in oral sex and convince themselves it is OK because it isn't intercourse. The wounds this causes are devastating and affect future relationships.

They shouldn't feel any of this pressure. The truth is she was created with tremendous love and significance. Her identity is rooted in something far greater and deeper than being sexy. As her father, you need to instill in her the truth of who she is and protect her from the lies.

4. The male perspective. As her dad, you are able to give her insight into how boys think about girls and sex. Traditionally, while girls are looking for a romantic connection, boys are looking to become a man. One of the lies most boys have been taught is becoming a man involves losing their virginity. While she's looking for a relationship, he is

looking to conquer. This still occurs, but in recent years girls have begun to approach sex in the same way guys do. Whether it is because they are buying into the same lie, losing their virginity makes them a woman or an attempt to equalize the situation, the unfortunate result is sex being reduced as a means to achieve power.

5. Sex is best in the right context. Sex was not created for that purpose. It was created as a gift for intimate connection. Relationships are what make life rich and full. We desire to know and be known. Sex is about being unified emotionally, spiritually and physically at the deepest level. Reaching the most pleasurable and fulfilling experience involves love, trust and a lifelong commitment. Sex was designed for the context of marriage, where there can be a complete vulnerability. Without a marriage commitment, barriers remain.

Many times when people have sex outside of marriage, the relationship loses its life or eventually ends leaving both people broken. It's like gluing two pieces of paper together and then ripping them apart. They will always carry a piece of that relationship with them. {eo}

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