

Dad, Here Are Your Lines

By now I'm sure you've heard me share one of the most significant things I've discovered about men over the last five years in leading The Abba Project. It's simply this:

Men would rather do *nothing* than do it wrong.

But that's not the whole story. Now I'm ready to update that observation after spending time with over 70 dads who have eagerly invested in becoming the best fathers they can be through this nine-month process:

Men are ready to do *something* as long as it connects with what or whom they're passionate about and as long as they have the template to succeed.

This is where I come in. As a woman, it is my desire to equip and support you as a dad to hit it out of the ballpark in the area of fathering your daughters. I want to help you to decode your daughters because I know we girls can be confusing. And once you've figured out the key to our hearts, you'll have this locked in!

Here's how it works as a win/win: Just read the scripts I give you and if it bombs, blame me. I'll be your fall guy. So there's no way you can do it wrong! And if you're anything like the dads I've walked alongside, once you see the positive responses from your daughter, you'll be convinced that this works.

If you're ready to kick it up a notch and daily invest in the heart space of your daughter, I want to give you the decoder version of how we girls understand and translate your responses to us. This underscores why I believe that YOU DAD are a key to building your daughter's confidence and identity. (I'm attaching a pdf of this list at the end of this blog, so you can print it out and use it as a daily reminder).

Here goes:

- If you, dad, laugh at her jokes, she tells herself, *"I'm funny."*
- If you discuss politics and world events with her, she tells herself, *"I'm interesting."*
- If you draw her out, asking her opinion about a fact, theory or line of thought, she tells herself, *"I'm knowledgeable."*
- If you ask for her help to fix something, she tells herself, *"I'm capable."*
- If you ask her to help you brainstorm about buying a present for mom, she tells herself, *"I'm clever."*
- If you applaud her for her achievements in sports, grades, music or work, she tells herself, *"I'm competent."*
- If you enthusiastically affirm her artistic endeavors, she tells herself, *"I'm creative."*
- If you celebrate her academic prowess, she tells herself, *"I'm smart."*
- If you actively listen to her while she is talking, she tells herself, *"I'm engaging."*
- If you teach her to say "no" and then respect her boundaries, she tells herself, *"I'm strong."*
- If you light up and brightly smile upon seeing her, she tells herself, *"I'm delightful."*
- If you respect her opinions about topics ranging from literature to spiritual things, she tells herself, *"I'm wise."*
- If you treat her with kindness, understanding, tenderness and love, she tells herself, *"I'm worthy."*

And on it goes.

There is no end to the impact on a daughter from the messages her dad gives can be positive or negative. It's up to you, Dad, to decide how you want to invest.

To sum up, the bottom line is this:

The clearer a dad's positive messages are to his daughter, the less reading between the lines she will need to do to figure out what you really think of her and how you see her. She will thrive as she knows and feels that she is delighted in by her father.

When a girl feels her dad's heart turned toward her, she believes she can be who she was created to be!

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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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