

Five Hair Don'ts and Hair Do's

It's a Friday afternoon in August.

2:30 p.m. –I had just gotten my hair cut and it turned out way shorter than I had wanted. The cut wasn't bad—it just wasn't what I expected.

5:30 p.m. –My parents pick me up and we head to Panera for dinner. Of course, I vent about my haircut. *For 10 minutes.* It was then that my mom (who is the sweetest, most gentle and tender soul on the planet) turned around and lovingly said to me, *“Do you think we could be happy now and maybe just move on?”*

I'd love to say that I received her invitation with grace and thanksgiving, but no. Here's what you would have heard if you were a fly on the inside of the car door as I responded with depth and maturity (*not!*):

“How do you think my clients would feel if, after 10 minutes of being in my office, I told them that they'd had enough of feeling sad for today and now it was time to move on and be happy?”

I then added, *“I have the privilege of listening to people's struggles all week and now it's my turn to be listened to. But you want me to be instantly happy. I figure things out by processing and I just need you to listen as I talk it out. That is a gift to me.”*

My cute momma said she would try to listen more (even though she'd clearly had enough of my complaining). But I kind of shut down after that; even though I was trying hard not to.

Through all of this my dad was sitting in the driver's seat of

the car, not saying a word. He held the ground steady as the ripples of the earthquake that started in the backseat were making their way forward. After living with four daughters and a wife, he's learned at times like this that it's best to stay silent until the storm has passed.

5:55 p.m. —We walk into Panera. The emotional air is thick around us but we order our food and try to salvage the evening as a best we could. My dad tells me that he really likes my haircut.

"You do? You're not just saying that?," I eek out.

"I think it is shaped nicely around your face and looks great on you."

"For real? You promise you really mean that? Okay, I'll try to believe you ... thanks Dad."

Hearing my dad's truth about my hair helped me to look through his eyes and settle down. I guess I needed a man's perspective more than I even realized.

My dad got it right that time. His tone, his truth and his timing were spot on.

6:05 p.m. —I can breathe again. Now I'm ready to enjoy eating a fantastic Greek Chicken Salad with a whole wheat baguette on the side. Partial meltdown complete. Total meltdown averted.

I don't know what happens at times like this for us girls when the world seems to cave in over a seemingly insignificant thing and it's hard to regain solid footing. That's when dad wins the triple word score by saying just the right thing in just the right way at just the right time.

It doesn't have to be a ton of verbiage, but your calming presence, Dad, and a few words of affirmation seem to do the trick.

The emotional torrents where the winds and waves hit unexpectedly have a way of dying down when the response from you parallels the desired outcome: *soft, gentle, tender, rational, clear*. That's when you save the day. That's when you save our day.

Dad, you can rescue a bad hair day and help turn it around by following a few simple steps. Let's call them the "Five Hair Don'ts and Hair Do's":

1. Don't talk louder in an attempt to overpower her intensity when she's overwhelmed. *Do* talk softly and gently (even if that doesn't seem very manly!).

2. Don't tell her what to feel or not to feel. *Do* tell her you're truly sorry she's having a hard day.

3. Don't tell her she is making a mountain out of a molehill. *Do* tell her that mountains (of emotional intensity) are part of life and you'll always be at the base of the mountain, ready and steady.

4. Don't tell her that she needs to toughen up. *Do* tell her that her sensitivity is one of her greatest strengths while teaching her by your example what it looks like to stay calm in the storm and work it through.

5. Don't tell her she shouldn't care about external things, like haircuts. *Do* tell her that you care about what she cares about (even if you can't fully understand it from her perspective).

On the worst hair day, there's nothing like having a dad who is in your corner cheering you on, telling you that you're going to be OK while affirming you through the process.

Dad ... don't ever forget how much we need you through the highs and the lows of life. You are one of our greatest resources when you come alongside us and help save the day.

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 help them focus more intentionally on consistently pursuing their daughters' hearts. She 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 he wants to be and his daughter needs him to be. You can also follow or send feedback on Facebook and Twitter.

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