

# The Dad Whisperer: Connecting With Your Child's Heart

It all started two years ago during an interview on a nationally syndicated radio program that heralds out of Chicago called "Chris Fabry Live." I had just written my book, *Dad, Here's What I Really Need from You: A Guide for Connecting With Your Daughter's Heart*, when Chris and I had the privilege of talking about it.

An incredible host, Chris knows how to talk about dads and daughters in large part due to the fact that he's a father to nine children!

During the interview he said something that caught me by surprise, while simultaneously touching my heart: "*Michelle, you should be called 'The Dad Whisperer.'*" I was immediately moved and excited that he affirmed my deep desire to positively support fathers.

Let's be honest. The fact that I, as a woman, am passionate about fathering isn't the norm among my female colleagues. And yet my passion grows year after year as my heart aches for women across this nation who make really poor life decisions that can often be traced in large part to a "dad wound" or a "dad void." In an attempt to address the root of the problem, God has sent me to Mars as an ambassador, I guess you could say.

Ever since Mr. Fabry suggested I be called "The Dad Whisperer," I have cherished that name. I continue to be overwhelmingly amazed that men write me and call me asking for input about their relationships with their daughters. And I'm thankful they know that I'm their ally and am championing their cause to be a better dad.

A few months ago I was telling a male colleague about my being

called "The Dad Whisperer," and he boldly said,

*"Michelle, you do understand us men and we can tell that you do. Actually, this is a fitting title for you because you actually are a dad whisperer. In truth, we don't like being shouted at by a woman and we wouldn't listen to you if you did!"*

So here I am, two years after hearing that title from Chris, and have recently accepted an invitation by a local radio station to host my own program. I probably don't have to tell you the name we've landed on: "The Dad Whisperer"!

In preparation for my inaugural program that will air at 2:30 p.m. on Mondays in Portland, Oregon on 93.9 KPDQ, which started Oct. 17 (for those of you who don't live in the area and want to listen, I'll be posting the podcasts on my website at [http://www.dadwhisperer.com](#)), I was challenged to finish this sentence:

If I could whisper to dads, I'd want them to know ...

**How much they matter.** Despite anything that men may have been told by our culture, the media, their family, or even their girls (especially during adolescence when most everything is upside down and backward), their influence and impact make all the difference in a daughter (and son) being strong and healthy and vibrant. Daughters (and sons) internalize their dads' view of them. That's one big reason dads matter.

**That they don't have to be perfect, but they have to be present.** In other words, there has to be the investment of quantity time, not just quality time (which runs counter to what we often hear, but the truth is that time is key to deepening relationships). When you're home, Dad, your family needs time with you (not all your time, but some of your time) where you are available—listening, asking questions, playing games, eating meals, laughing, wrestling, throwing the ball, helping with homework, watching a favorite TV show together and so on.

**Their affirmation goes deep and sticks.** I don't know what it is about a dad's words that pack such a punch, but they do. The research confirms this as well. Conversely, words that are contrary also stick. But since my goal here is to come alongside and support you in your desire to do fathering right, I want to remind you of the power of your positive words to motivate, inspire, lead and breathe life into the core of your kids.

**That apples don't fall far from trees.** What I mean by this is that your kids are a reflection of your positive and negative traits. I imagine that the child in your home who has a special knack for pushing your buttons is probably the one who is most like you. So rather than focusing on what your son or daughter is doing wrong and camping on constant correction, try looking within yourself and make changes there first. Then your little apples will be healthier and sweeter since the tree is standing tall with deep roots.

**That I am their champion.** For real. No hidden agenda. I promise! I honestly don't have a desire to control or manipulate men. But I really, really, *really* believe that if the hearts of fathers turn toward their children then our whole nation will improve for the better. Girls will stop "looking for love in all the wrong places" (cue music) and boys will stop pursuing physical power as evidence that they are strong enough and will instead believe in who they are apart from performance. I guess that goes for girls too.

So there you have it. I guess I'm officially embracing a new title: The Dad Whisperer.

As I get started, feel free to send me questions you'd like me to address on the air or "hypothetical scenarios" that might have you confused or lost or stuck as a dad to a daughter (how's that for a good way to say that your stories will always stay confidential). Write me at [drmichelle@](mailto:drmichelle@) and let's start the conversation.

I'd be grateful if you could humor me as I finish with the most corny close to any blog I've written to date! This is a variation on an old quote I heard years ago that comes to mind as I sign off:

I'll see you here, there or ON (rather than *IN*) the air! {eo}

**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 nine-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 released her first book titled, *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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