

What Your Daughter Desperately Wants to Tell You

I wish you could sit in my counseling office, even for part of a day, because you'd hear what I consistently hear from teenage girls and 20-something women.

You'd hear how often they doubt themselves, how often they fear a future without a boyfriend to love them back, how often they don't know how to express what's really going on inside so tears flow freely without words. You'd hear how often they can't get their feet on the ground when their primary relationships are in turmoil, how often they feel they don't matter because they haven't yet figured out their purpose and how often they wonder where God is at in the mix of the confusion and conflict, disappointments and delays, heartbreak and hopelessness.

And if you were there with me, the two of us would actually realize that we were standing on sacred ground. For whenever someone invites us into their deepest, most vulnerable place—that place that is raw and real, where it's messy and complicated—we actually receive a gift. To be trusted at that level is an honor of unparalleled proportion.

Dad, do you know how privileged you are when your daughter lets you know her at that depth? I guarantee that she wants to be known by you, and it's up to you to create an atmosphere of acceptance where she feels safe enough to reveal her heart to you.

It's in the context of that personal relationship that you will pour into your daughter's heart from the overflow in yours. And just in case she doesn't quite have the words to tell you what she needs, I'll do my best to say it for her.

- She longs for you to notice her.

- She longs for you to listen to her.
- She longs for you to affirm her.
- She longs to know that you believe she is worthy.
- She longs for you to never give up on her.
- She longs for you to be patient with her (especially when you're struggling the most to do so).
- She longs for you to keep your promises.
- She longs for you to comfort her with your steady, solid, strong, masculine presence.
- She longs for you to validate her (even when she doesn't make sense to you).
- She longs for you to love her where she is, flaws and all.
- She longs for you to tell her what you see when you look at her.
- She longs for you to express why you love her.
- She longs to hear that she's beautiful in your eyes.
- She longs for you to choose her even when everything else calls for your attention.
- She longs for you to pursue her even when she pushes you away for a season.
- She longs for you to give of yourself and your resources (which tangibly tells her she's valuable).
- She longs for you to humbly admit when you've blown it and ask for forgiveness. She longs for you to be present and involved, because it says her life matters to you.

The more you care about her longings, the more she will connect with them herself.

And the more she connects with her longings, the more she will thrive while saying, "all my longings lie open before you, Lord (Ps. 38:9, NIV). {eoa}

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forum 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 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.