

Why Your Child Doesn't Feel Close to You

When my daughter, Darcy, was in elementary school, I happened to be walking by her room and heard her crying behind her closed door. Not just crying, but sobbing. All sorts of horrible situations raced through my mind.

"Oh, no," I moaned. "Something's wrong." I was ready to race into her room to rescue her from all sorts of evil things.

But I contained myself, and opening her door, I peeked in. She was sitting on her bed, tears spilling down her cheeks.

"What's wrong?" I asked, trying to control the trembling in my voice.

She looked up at me with a quivering lip and cried out, "I don't have anyone to play with."

No one to play with? Huh? What's so important about that? Certainly nothing to cry about.

All the initial fears I'd had dissipated in relief. But then the seeming silliness of her sobs about something so insignificant began to well up inside me, and I almost laughed.

Almost. Fortunately, I caught myself.

In just the previous few months, I had begun understanding how Darcy prefers having fun with other people and if that can happen constantly, all the better. That's essential to her. It's not to me, because people drain me. I prefer being alone. But Darcy is energized by people, and fun is her middle name.

As I walked toward Darcy, I understood her distress and felt her sadness.

“Oh, honey, I’m so sorry. I love how you enjoy being with your friends. What would you like to do about it?”

We then talked about several options, but we also talked about how being alone could be an opportunity to do quiet things like praying or reading.

As we chatted, I could tell my response of sympathy and considering important what was important to her had bonded us.

In our busy lives, it’s easy to belittle and make light of the things that concern our children. To us, their worries are light in comparison to our hefty anxieties. But Darcy’s concern was big to her! A glib reply of telling her she shouldn’t feel that way or me not trying to feel her loneliness, could have communicated she wasn’t important to me.

Proverbs 18:2 (NIV) warns us, “Fools find no pleasure in understanding but delight in airing their own opinions.”

I was so grateful God had opened my eyes to the needs of my little girl—and what is important to her. {eo}

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