



The Daddy Difference

Ways to Build A Rock-Solid Father-Daughter Relationship

- **Be affectionate.** Give plenty of hugs and verbal expressions of love, letting her know that she is cherished, respected and unconditionally loved. Tell her you love her often and why. Talk about how beautiful she is on the inside--her smile, her spirit, her sense of humor and all her other intrinsic assets.
- **Be a listener.** Even if hearing about the latest fashion fad or “girl chatter” isn’t the most fascinating topic, pay close attention. You can learn plenty about her hopes, dreams and concerns. Be affirming and compassionate.
- **Make and keep promises.** A trusting relationship with your daughter helps her understand that men can be trustworthy and reliable. If you make a commitment to be at a ball game, recital or other important event, make sure you are there. If you promise to keep a confidence, honor it.
- **Plan fun “Daddy Dates”.** These outings are excellent opportunities to show her how she should be treated by members of the opposite sex. Treat her the way you want her to be treated by her future dates and relationships. Take her to a nice restaurant, listen, talk, and let her know how much you enjoy her company.
- **Respect her mother.** The most powerful model for your daughter is your relationship with her mother. If it is one of respect and loving compassion, it sets the pace for her expectations in future relationships. If you and her mother are not still married, it is important for her to see her mother treated with respect even under difficult circumstances. Kindness and respect toward female friends, relatives and other women also let her know how women are to be treated.
- **Be involved in her interests.** If she is involved in sports, go to the games; if she is involved in music or dance, go to the recitals. Learn about her interests so you can talk about them and encourage her.
- **Be there at all the important life events.** Have an important presence at birthdays, the first day of school, first date, proms, and other special occasions. These are important moments for you and your daughter and your presence will ensure a special place in those memories.
- **Write notes, cards and letters.** Give your daughter written reminders of how you feel about her that she can read over and over again. Let her know how much you love her and how proud you are of her.
- **Be firm and set boundaries when needed.** Be her protector. Don’t be afraid to enforce curfews, consistently address inappropriate behavior or deal with other aspects of your daughter’s life that give her direction. This should be done in calm, loving way that lets her know that you love her and want her to be the best she can be.
- **Don’t be silent.** Speak up and share the wisdom you have gained from your successes and mistakes. Through your experience, help her learn problem solving strategies. Otherwise, by your silence, your daughter may make inaccurate assumptions that could dramatically impact her life.

- ***Have the sex talk.*** Share in depth information about sex and dating, including how boys are wired sexually. Avoid leaving this job solely to her mother who can never provide the male perspective as well as you.
- ***Let her know who you are.*** Be relevant, interact and remain in her life in a meaningful way. Let her know who you are personally--how life was growing up, your passions, joys and regrets.