

Five Power Strategies a Dad Can Use to Lead His Daughter

by Dr. Michelle Watson Canfield
from *Let's Talk: Conversation Starters for Dads and Daughters*
drmichellewatson.com

Lead Her to LAUGH

Your goal, Dad, is to lay a solid and connected foundation with your daughter by bonding with her through shared laughter while enhancing her

own self-discovery. Neuroscientists confirm the importance of laughing together, claiming that **our brains release chemicals when we laugh in ways that strengthen long-term relationships and reinforce social bonding.** So if laughter is the best medicine, then every father would benefit from increasing his skill set in activating it with his daughter, wouldn't you say?

Dad, ask your daughter:

1. What about me makes you laugh?
2. What item of my clothing would you love to see me get rid of?
3. Do you ever think about your wedding day? If so, what do you imagine? If not, why not?
4. What are three outrageous things you wish you had the nerve to do?
5. If you could be any animal, which one would you say is most like you and why?

Lead Her to LOVE

Your goal, Dad, is to lead your daughter to love herself while embracing who she is in a positive way. Then out of the overflow, she can pour her beauty

and lovingkindness into others with an empowered desire to positively impact the world. Because you play a key role in the strength of your daughter's health and well-being, when you consistently deposit love into her heart space, she never has to doubt that she's worthy of love, which sets a solid foundation for the way she sees herself and subsequently gives to others. **Then she won't go looking for love in all the wrong places; instead, she'll be looking to love in all the right places.** Your daughter will thrive when she lives to love.

Dad, ask your daughter:

1. What do you see as your three greatest strengths and gifts? [Dad, this would be a good time to tell her what you see as her strengths.]
2. If I were to fill up your love tank and make you feel more loved, special, accepted, and enjoyed, what could I do *specifically* to make that happen?
3. They say that when girls and women have self-limiting beliefs, it sabotages their dreams. What are a couple of negative beliefs you have about yourself that have stifled your dreaming more?
4. How would you define the term *world changer*, and how can you envision it describing you now or in the future?
5. If you and I were to volunteer together, what could we do and what positive impact to our relationship and to the community do you imagine from our joining to make a difference?

Lead Her to LOOK

Your goal, Dad, is to walk with your daughter into deeper, more vulnerable self-examination regarding her relationship with herself and her relationships

with others. **If you don't weigh in on these subjects with her, every other voice will speak into her life except yours.** And because the loudest voices usually win, often drowning out her own, it's of vital importance that your input be clear, consistent, constructive, and celebratory. Your daughter needs an invitation from you to be brutally honest with herself (and with you), coupled with encouragement to admit weakness and confusion.

Dad, ask your daughter:

1. Do I do anything that shuts you down or makes you less confident to share your thoughts and feelings with me?
2. Where and when is it *easiest/hardest* for you to be your true self?

Five Power Strategies a Dad Can Use to Lead His Daughter

3. Where and when is it *easiest/hardest* to stand up, stand strong, and stand alone and is there any way I can better support you to be a leader, change-maker, and independent thinker?
4. If the sky was the limit, money was no object, time had no relevance, and anything was possible, what could you imagine doing with your life?
5. From watching me, what have you learned about relating to God as a Father or *connecting/not connecting* with your spiritual side?

Lead Her to LAMENT

Your goal, Dad, is to get close enough to your daughter to hear her heart cries about grief she carries while making amends for any hurts you've

caused her. **During interpersonal conflicts, the one on the receiving end of the hurtful interaction tends to remember details longer and more clearly than the one who spoke the words or displayed the action.**

When it comes to dad-daughter relationships, your daughter will remember the blasts and blows from you more clearly than you do. *This is why you must rise up and seize the opportunity to begin this conversation with your daughter, listening to how you've hurt her with an objective toward being a catalyst to her healing process.* And if her hurts are from others, your listening ear will go a long way to healing her heart as you carry her pain with her.

Dad, ask your daughter:

1. What is one thing about you that would help me be a better dad to you if I understood it?
2. When you think about our relationship through the years, when do you remember us being the closest, and are we as close as you'd like us to be now?
3. Do I do anything that shuts you down or makes you less confident to share your thoughts and feelings with me?
4. Can you remember any specific words I've spoken to you that have stuck with you that have made you feel *better/worse* about yourself?
5. Do you ever get mad at God or blame him for taking someone away from you? If so, what does that feel like, and if not, why not?

Lead Her to LISTEN

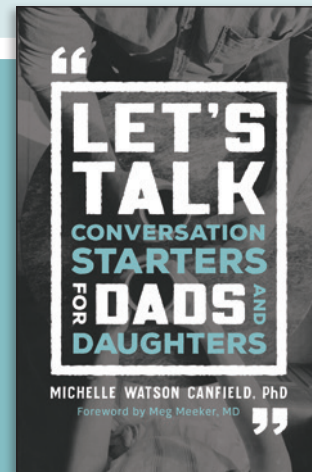
Your goal, Dad, is to facilitate the activation of your daughter's voice by letting her ask you questions about your life as she hones her ability to listen

intently. Your daughter will be inspired **when hearing about obstacles you've overcome to get where you are today, which gives her more freedom to tell you**

what's going on in her life and admit her struggles, as well as helping her strengthen her interpersonal skills. True listening has become a lost art in our fast-paced, distraction-driven, technology-laden age, and who better than you for your daughter to practice the art of talking and listening!

Daughter, ask your dad:

1. What is one of your happiest childhood memories?
2. What is one of the most stupid things you've ever done?
3. What is something no one told you that you had to learn the hard way?
4. Can you describe the kind of forever love you believe is worth the wait?
5. Who were your positive spiritual role models and mentors at my age? What about now?



Let's Talk: Conversation Starters for Dads and Daughters

Dr. Michelle Watson Canfield

drnichellewatson.com