

QUESTIONS FOR TALKING WITH YOUR DAUGHTER ABOUT SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY, AND SAME-SEX ATTRACTION

by Michelle Watson Canfield, PhD, LPC

[Adapted from *Let's Talk: Conversation Starters for Dads and Daughters*, available on Amazon or at drmichellewatson.com]

Dad, now is the time to build your competence and confidence as you invest in your daughter's life by talking with her about these topics, leading with bold intention and courageous pursuit with a foundation of honor, love, and respect.

Here's a way you could bring up this topic with her: *"Hi, honey. I know this may be a challenging conversation, but because I love you and really want to understand you better, I wonder if we could have an open and honest conversation about sexual orientation, gender identity, and same sex-attraction. I'm not trying to change your mind or force my beliefs on you, so if you need us to stop at any point, let me know, and I'll respect your decision. But if you're willing to give it a try, I'll be using Dr. Michelle's script to guide our interaction so there's a better chance of moving in a positive direction. What do you say?"*

1. Have you known someone who has been teased or criticized about their sexuality or sexual orientation?
2. What are your thoughts/beliefs/convictions/opinions about someone being straight, gay, transgender, bi-sexual, non-binary, or non-gender (one who experiences gender as both male and female)?
3. How would you describe the cultural climate around you in response to someone saying that he or she is straight? Is it accepted? Or is exploration around sexuality encouraged and celebrated, even questioned, and how does that impact you?
4. How do you view your own sexuality? Would you describe yourself by using any of these terms listed above (#2) or would you describe yourself another way?
5. I want you to know that I love you and I always will. Have I ever made you feel unlovable, unaccepted, or unworthy because of your sexuality? Or for any other reason?
6. Is there anything about my beliefs or convictions or attitudes that has ever shut you down or made it hard to talk with me about these things?
7. How can I better support you now that we've talked honestly and this is all out in the open?
8. Would you be willing to hear my thoughts/beliefs/convictions/opinions around sexuality? My goal isn't to preach at you, dominate you, shame you, or belittle you, but I would appreciate being able to share my heart with you for a few minutes. Would that be okay? *[If she says no, you must honor her by lovingly ending the conversation there. Perhaps she'll be open to hearing from you at another time. Your warm response today will set a foundation for the future, even if she doesn't want to hear your thoughts right now.]*

