

100
WAYS
TO
Love
YOUR
Daughter

THE SIMPLE, POWERFUL PATH TO
A CLOSE AND LASTING RELATIONSHIP

MATT & LISA JACOBSON

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INTRODUCTION

How can you cultivate and keep a close, loving relationship with your daughter? Whatever her age, how can you reach and hold on to her heart through the years? Perhaps she's young and you already have her heart, but how will you keep it as she grows older? You desire the best for her, but how do you translate that love into a relationship that will endure?

This book is a resource for what to do, what to say, and how to treat daughters of all ages. For you to maintain a continuous, growing relationship with her, she needs to know and experience your love—and that is the reason for this book. Just read one entry per day, consider it, and then apply it to your relationship with her.

Sometimes we need to change what we think. Sometimes we need to change what we say (and how we say it!). And sometimes we need to change what we do. For some parents, it's a minor adjustment. For others, it will

be a dramatic reform. But for all parents, it's the journey of loving your daughter better each day as you are learning to love her well—the foundation of a meaningful, trusting relationship that will stand the test of time as she becomes a woman.

We are the parents of eight awesome children, including four girls ages nineteen to twenty-four. We've walked this journey and are still making it with you. We haven't always done it right and hope you find us to be transparent about our mistakes, but we are grateful to enjoy close, loving relationships with our girls. Wherever you are on this journey, learning to love your daughter well is the path to all that's best in your relationship with her today and in the future.

Matt & Lisa Jacobson

Ask her **REAL QUESTIONS.**

Close. That's how our friend describes our relationship with our daughters. And it's true, we are close. We laugh and hug and talk about most everything. So how did we get there? How did we grow so close?

This kind of closeness comes from seeking—from seeking their hearts and pursuing a relationship. It comes from being interested in their thoughts, fears, hopes, and dreams.

And it comes from asking questions.

We ask our daughters questions most every day. We wonder how they're doing, what they're thinking about, and how they're feeling.

Our girls need us to ask them about these things. They won't necessarily volunteer what's on their hearts and minds. They need us to ask, and they need us to care about their answers.

Your daughter needs you to ask her too.

Get up early
AND WATCH THE SUNRISE
together.

Another week begins. It's time to get to work, the gym, that event. The demands won't lighten up and neither will the speed of your daughter's growth and maturity. Time will race by, and she'll be out the door and off to the next phase of her life with lightning speed. There will never be a convenient time to slow down and just "be" with your daughter. There's just too much to do.

And yet, somehow, busy, wise parents find the time.

How? If we're honest, every one of us has time for those things that are truly important to us. In fact, that's what we've already done, whether we're the parent who pauses to enjoy God's handiwork with our daughter or the parent who never takes the time. Both types of parents have prioritized what is important. Which one are you?

Love your daughter by elevating her over the demands of your schedule—by anticipating the natural

beauty of a sunrise or sunset or some other scene that says, “Let’s take a few minutes to share God’s creation together.”

A close relationship with your daughter is built by finding and sharing those moments together.

Give her **A WARM HUG.**

She walked into the room, and since I'm her mom, I could tell she was worked up before she even reached me. It probably had nothing to do with me, but I sensed that I would suffer the brunt of it all the same. Before she really got going, however, I had the sudden inspiration to reach out and give her a hug—not a quick obligatory hug either, but a slow, deliberate, no-agenda embrace.

I think we were both somewhat surprised at that moment. But the impact on her spirit—and on our relationship—was undeniable. Whatever it was that had been eating at her seemed to slip away.

Sometimes your girl doesn't need words or instruction or correction as much as she simply needs your caring hug. So reach out and hug her tight today.

Write her A LETTER.

When was the last time you received a handwritten letter, or even a typed one? How did it make you feel? Letters are increasingly uncommon, and chances are it's been a long time (never?) since you've written one. In this case, that's good news. When you write a letter, it will stand out and have a powerful impact. It will be something your daughter can cherish for life.

Writing can be intimidating, but your letter doesn't have to earn international literary acclaim. Honest thoughts are all that are necessary for a meaningful letter from your heart to hers.

Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Tell her how proud of her you are.
- Tell her what you love about her personality.
- Tell her of your lifelong commitment to her.
- Tell her of your confidence in her and in her future.

Maybe purchase some special paper and an envelope, which will add to this heartfelt gift.

And another tip—write your rough draft on basic lined paper or type it out first. You might have a few changes to make before your final version is ready. Then write the final draft on your intended stationery.

If you have to send your letter, do so. If your daughter still lives at home, leave your letter someplace she will be sure to find it.

Be ready TO HAPPILY *serve* HER.

You might consider our daughters spoiled once we share this.

Every morning since they were old enough to drink coffee (which in our house is embarrassingly young), their dad would make a pot of French-press coffee and serve them a cup the way each one liked it. A little splash of cream, the right amount of sugar, and in their own special cup. He never missed this daily ritual as long as he was home.

It might seem like he was spoiling them, but he always took such pleasure in serving them their coffee this way each morning. Handing them a sweet cup of coffee to start out their day was his way of saying, “I love you” without saying a single word.

Maybe your daughter doesn’t drink coffee, but you have many other creative options and opportunities to serve her with a smile. Pick one of those ways and start serving her today.

Arrange FOR A *father-daughter* DATE.

Many dads are head over heels about their daughters. Ask them. They'll tell you.

"My little Karen is an amazing . . ."

"You should see Chloe when she . . ."

"Audrey is the most awesome . . ."

We may love our daughters, but sometimes the connection between how we feel and what we've communicated to them needs more focus. She is left to wonder what she really means to you. There's nothing like a daddy-daughter date to speak the answer to her question loud and clear: "Yes, you are a special, wonderful person—especially to me."

For our daughters to feel a sense of their own value, they need to know *we want to, we desire to, and we like to* spend time with them.

I have enjoyed some father-daughter dates with my girls over the years, and by God's grace, I have wonderful

relationships with them. But, I can tell you, I wish I would have dated them far more than I did.

We dads need to push back on the pressures of life to make room for the relationships that really matter.

Give her
OPPORTUNITIES TO
serve others.

The call for help came in the middle of the day. This young mom was clearly in a tough circumstance and needed some advice. I recognized the desperate tone in her voice and told her I'd be over as soon as I could.

But what about her four young ones, plus a little baby? Who could stay with them on such short notice while she and I went out to talk it through? I approached one of my daughters and briefly explained the situation. She caught on right away and began filling her backpack with fun toys, a princess crown, and party whistles. In a few short minutes, she was packed and ready to go.

The children shyly stood back when we first arrived, but soon my friend and I were able to slip out to spend a tearful, healing conversation over a cup of tea. We returned to find my daughter playing a board game with my friend's children while the baby slept sweetly in her arms.

Surprising, yet not surprising. Wasn't it just yesterday that this little lady before me was sleeping sweetly in my own arms?

What a gift to show your girl how she can be a blessing to others by serving them well.