



Building a relationship of trust and harmony with your daughter.

by Pam Farrel and Doreen Hanna

her life's symphony begins with you

A mom is like the orchestra conductor in the symphony of her daughter's life. Mom, if you tap your baton to the sheet music of Scripture, some amazing things can happen in your daughter's heart.

Moms have a profound influence on us—for good, or not. Both of us [Doreen and Pam] feel grateful for mothers who cared for and influenced our lives in amazing ways. Our mothers' influence gave us a heart for serving others and the confidence to lead.

I (Doreen) am grateful that God's divine plan purposed that I would be raised by a godly mother. I carried her simple words of wisdom into the lives of my own two daughters and now I'm beginning to see them passed on to my granddaughters. We establish traditions by the things we *speak* to the next generation (once again we see the power of our words).

My mom [Pam's] would get a high mother rating because she provided a beat for my life I could "dance to." The resounding mantras of my mother's words echo in my heart: take the high road, be part of the solution, and search for God until you find Him.

Her efforts matched her words that still echo in my heart each day as I rise to lead: "You can do this thing, Pam. Do it well."

My mother is the first to point out her shortcomings, though. You also might feel inadequate in your motherhood role for some reason, but that's what is so wonder-

ful about God. He takes our best efforts and adds Himself to the mix, in spite of any inadequacies we feel as a parent or any imperfections in our environment.

As the maestro of your daughter's life, what are the main chords God would like you to play in her heart so that someday she can live a life that is a series of beautiful notes? The traits your daughter needs to see in you are:

Security
Industry
Nobility
Generosity.

These are the same traits to begin weaving into her own life so she can live out God's song for her.

SECURITY We know that teen girls today face tough decisions. Your daughter needs to feel secure and safe in her relationship with you. First and foremost, I [Doreen] believe there must be the element of trust between mother and daughter. As our daughters begin to develop physically, it generally comes with a growing spirit of independence.

Peer pressure often adds to this new spirit of wanting to see and try things differently. I am talking about small things—like the way they dress, speak, comb their hair, and so on. I am not referring to choices that endanger their lives.

Demonstrating your trust in your daughter is the greatest gift you can give her at this stage of her life. Allow her to begin making decisions about relatively small things that may be different from the choices you would make for her. Ask her first to present the alternatives with their pros and cons. Then ask her to explain her decision and the reasoning behind it. Share your perspective and recommendations when she asks for them.

There will be times when you must stand firm for what you know protects her integrity or her future. At times, you prove your love by saying “No.” God will hold us accountable for the manner in which we do that.

INDUSTRY Being a mom, you KNOW how much work life takes. Your daughter needs you to model and build into her a strong work ethic. Take a look at Proverbs 31 and note all the verbs from parts of the chapter below about the virtuous woman:

She *brings*, she *selects*, she *gets up*, she *considers*, she *sets* about her work vigorously, she *sees* that her trading is profitable, and her lamp *does not go out* at night.

She *speaks* with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.

She *watches* over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.

Reward her hard work as creatively as you can.

NOBILITY Your daughter needs to see you as a woman who respects herself, and she needs to learn how to have self-respect so she can value herself as God values her. In a world fraught with pressure and societal expectations, it can be a challenge to help a young lady see herself from God’s vantage point and make choices that reflect that viewpoint.

You demonstrate trust by *verbalizing* your encouragement and challenging your daughter to make her own healthy choices.

You show your respect for her by *remaining silent* when she makes choices you might not agree with and you allow her to experience the consequences, either good or bad, accordingly. While you have been entrusted by God to protect and nurture your daughter, there will be times she needs to make her own decisions.

There may also be times you must confront her unhealthy behaviors or choices. Pray for wisdom in this area. If necessary, seek advice from other women you trust and respect.

Keep in mind that instilling nobility in your daughter also requires addressing her sexual purity. Generations X and Y have been equipped with many wonderful books, seminars, and DVDs on this subject for teenage girls and their parents.

My personal recommendation is that you establish some quality time to be spent taking advantage of one of these resources. Success will depend on your own and your daughter’s comfort level (keeping in mind that it is sometimes necessary to move beyond comfort to address what is important).

We are blessed to serve a God who redeems our brokenness. IF your daughter has made wrong choices in this area, remind her that God forgives and honors her repentant heart. Talk freely about the importance of making the choice, regardless of past mistakes, to move forward with a determination to view her sexuality as a precious gift, meant only to be shared with the future husband God has for her.

GENEROSITY Equip your daughter to be generous and kind. One way of doing this is by your own example. Are you generous? Generosity doesn’t automatically mean monetary gifts, though that can be a blessing to others.

You can be generous with your time. Do you give to missions or charity organizations? Even if you give a small amount, caring for the less fortunate teaches your daughter that helping others—even in different countries—should be a priority to her.

Presently, you have the high calling to be a role model to your teenage daughter, with a desire to create a bond that will last a lifetime.

One of the skills I [Pam] teach parents to do when raising a teen (and especially when dealing with a prodigal child) is to parent “by faith and not fear.” It is always better to influence from a place of faith—not fear:

Fear says, “Don’t get pregnant before you are married.”

Faith says, “I know you will make wise relationship choices.”

Fear says, “Don’t drive drunk! Don’t do drugs!”

Faith says, “I know I will hear a great report about you from the parents and leaders when I see them tomorrow.”

Fear says to a daughter, “I don’t trust you.” This makes her think, *My parents already think I’m going to do it, so I will try it.* (Whatever sin “it” is.)

Faith says just the opposite, “I trust you. I trust that you will honor God. I trust that you will honor our family. I trust that you will honor your friendship circle. I trust you will honor yourself and your inner core values.”

This isn’t to say that she won’t make mistakes along the way. Part of the growing process (for all of us) is learning from our mistakes. The key is to consistently be a source of love, trust, and truth for her.

Remember the simple acrostic SING and soon you will enjoy seeing your daughter dance to the song God placed into her heart and into the bright future He has for her.

WHO’S IN THE CHOIR? Since we’re talking about singing, now is a good time to point out that it takes many voices to move a young woman forward in her life; her mom, her dad, and her mentors create a choir of wisdom that surround her life and help her sing the song God intended for her. Let’s take a closer look at mentor/mom relationships, shall we?

A mentor is often a mother’s best advocate!

At times a mentor will confirm things that you have said numerous times to that precious young girl of yours, but which have not previously sunk in! She’ll return home and share her new revelation with you! Oh, those moments when we mothers must join in our children’s enthusiasm and rejoice that they had such an epiphany without saying a word or rolling our eyes!

Pray, all three of you—mom, mentor, and daughter—trusting God together for the growth, wisdom, and strength that every young woman needs in order to forge a fantastic foundation for life and love. Your daughter will feel loved and valued as she sees you both spend your precious time on her behalf.

It takes a choir around a soloist to really highlight her voice; in the same way, loving adults surrounding a Modern-Day Princess will make her life SING! ❧

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