

Names are changed to honor client confidentiality.

A Girl Needs Her Dad

It's doubtful that many fathers realize how important they are. I don't question it. As a daughter, I have firsthand experience, and as a counselor, I'm reminded on a regular basis of a father's immense impact. Some clients' faces often brighten at the mere mention of their dad, while other clients grieve a weak or missing connection. And just as the father-son relationship is special, so is the bond between father and daughter.

Gregory E. Lang illuminates that invaluable and irreplaceable bond in his book, [Why a Daughter Needs a Dad](#). He writes: "Nurtured with love, the relationship strengthens and brings out the best in both, softening the rough edges of fathers and providing strength and security for their daughters."

Laced throughout Lang's small but powerful book, are moving photographs and snippets of wisdom explaining how dads "nurture with love." Lang is the father of a daughter, so his writings are "loving reflections" of what he hopes to bring to her life.

Here are some thoughts from Lang's book:

A daughter needs a dad so:

- she will have at least one hero who will not let her down.
- that when no one else is there for her, she can close her eyes and see him.
- she learns that men can be trustworthy.

A daughter needs a dad who:

- teaches her that she is important by stopping what he is doing to watch her.
- will never think she is too old to need him.
- will let her know that while she may not be the center of someone else's world, she is the center of his.

A daughter needs a dad to:

- teach her to believe that she deserves to be treated well.
- tell her that all is not hopeless, even when she feels it is.
- join her journey when she is too afraid to walk alone.
- teach her that a man's strength is not the force of his hand or his voice, but the kindness of his heart.
- teach her that her value as a person is more than the way she looks.
- teach her that family is more important than work.
- be the safe spot she can always turn to.
- be the standard against which she will judge all men.
- teach her to weigh the consequences of her actions and make decisions accordingly.

- protect her when she is not wise enough to protect herself.
- think highly of her when no one else will.
- help her take the risks that will build her confidence.
- help her try again whenever she fails.
- teach her what kind of man to choose to be the father of her children.
- give her the gentle pushes that help her grow.
- show her that all boys are not like the one who hurt her.
- hold her as she cries.

I can only agree with Lang: Dad's can bring out the best in their daughters.

Girls thrive as they experience the unwavering dependability of a father. When a daughter gazes into her dad's eyes, she needs to feel how special she is to him, and sense that he will never turn away. Any fear that he might someday remove her from his heart should be nonexistent.

When a daughter feels emotionally abandoned by her dad, the pain is horrendous and frequently manifests in a weakened sense of self-worth.

Mattie, a client expressed it well: "If my father doesn't want to be around me, who would?"

That's how important dads are.

On the other hand, the steadfastness of a dad's adoring eyes—his enduring excitement to see her—makes her shine inside. The result is an unshakable self-confidence.

As a personal example, I remember when I was in sixth grade telling my dad I wanted to be an astronomer when I grew up. Dad smiled warmly and said: "Salee, I'm convinced you can be anything you want to be." Dad's vote of confidence and his solid belief in my abilities and what I could achieve have carried me throughout my life.

And speaking of my dad, fond memories were activated when I read one of the lines from Lang's book: "A daughter needs a dad who does not mind when she steps on his shoes while dancing."

Yep, fathers give us daughters something very special. Let's never, ever lose sight of that.