



What to do when your
child doesn't want
to talk to you
about dating

KARA POWELL

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Photo by André Josselin

Last Friday was the first time our 14 year-old son didn't want to talk to me about girls.

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He was going to a school dance—his first as a ninth grader at a new school. I was headed with our two daughters to speak at a

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Mother/Daughter retreat. Since I didn't have a chance to see him after school, I called him on our drive up the mountains.

I asked him what he was going to wear. He didn't really know but named a few possible shirts (my daughters would have had their "outfits" picked out a week ahead).

I asked him if he was going to ask a girl to dance. He said he didn't know.

Trying to help my son think ahead about different scenarios, I named a few girls from his middle school who were now at his high school.

He sighed and responded, "Mom, I don't want to talk to my 48 year-old mom about who I'm

going to dance with.”

I answered, “Well, first off, I’m 45 and not 48.” We both chuckled and I continued, “And I totally get that. Have a great time at the dance. I’ll be praying for you.” And we hung up a few minutes later.

Last week he talked to me about flirting. Two weeks ago he talked to me about how to handle a girl who likes him and keeps texting him. And next week he might feel comfortable talking to me about girls at school.

But not this week.

And that’s OK. It’s normal. And because of our Sticky Faith research, I’m not freaking out.

When he actually starts dating someone, I hope he wants to talk to me. But if he doesn’t want to talk to me or my husband, he’s got a team of amazing men to talk to. **Because of Sticky Faith’s research showing how important it is that young people feel supported by five adults, Dave and I have been extra intentional in connecting Nathan with five amazing men—who range in age from 39 to 72.** Nathan knows he can talk to any of them about what he’s feeling, especially when those feelings aren’t something he wants to talk about with mom or dad.

If you’re a parent, what can you do this month to connect your child with at least one amazing adult so that when (not if, but when) they don’t want to talk to you about something important, they still have someone they can go to?

If you’re a youth leader, how can you help the families in your church develop those types of relationships?

Our kids might not talk to us about anything. And our kids’ friends don’t know any more than them. That’s why I’m so grateful for adults who serve as listening ears to our kids—just when they need them the most.