

interviewing your
daughter's date

30 MINUTES MAN-TO-MAN



dennis rainey

Practical, useful, and relevant—giving us dads a great way to make our daughters feel protected and valued!

—Stephen Thorne
President and CEO
Pacific Dental Services

This is a crucial next step for every dad who cares about his daughters. Dennis will give you the courage and how-tos to be the dad God wants you to be. Read the book and do it. You will be a hero!

—Michael Easley
Lead Pastor
Fellowship Bible Church Nashville

It simply lays out how to be a great friend to and advocate for your daughter. I have four daughters and this book gives me the courage to be the dad that God intended for me to be.

—Scott Beck
CEO and Founder of Tango
a private investment firm

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by dennis rainey
with lawrence kimbrough

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FAMILYLIFE®

I dedicate this book to:

Michael, Jake, and Jason.

Each of you men has received one of the finest gifts I could
ever give . . . one of my daughters. I love you.

Dad R

And to my friend, coach, and encourager, Jerry Wunder.

You were the one who first exhorted me, by your example,
to protect my daughters. I admire your faith and commitment
over the past two decades.

The father of a daughter . . . is nothing but a high-class hostage.

*A father turns a stony face to his sons, berates them,
shakes his antlers, paws the ground, snorts, runs them off
into the underbrush, but when his daughter puts her arm
over his shoulder and says, "Daddy, I need to ask you
something," he is a pat of butter in a hot frying pan.*

GARRISON KEILLOR

The Book of Guys

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Foreword

Few people have been more helpful to my parenting skills than my friend Dennis Rainey. I'm still benefiting from a particular challenge he gave me years ago when my girls were young:

“Robert, date your daughters. Show them how a real man should act to honor and respect them.”

I'm glad I listened. Those dates built priceless memories between my daughters and me.

Here is another high-value move for dads with daughters—the interview. In our community, Dennis is legendary for this.

The guys around here knew the way to Dennis' daughters was *through Dennis*. No, it didn't keep the boys away. But it sure got their attention and, afterward, their respect. Everyone benefited from this simple act of paternal initiative: dad, daughter, and date.

A lot of boys took significant steps toward manhood by passing the interview. And Dennis' daughters have grown to love and admire their daddy *more* because of it.

That, Dad, could be you too.

Robert Lewis
Founder of Men's Fraternity



Courtesy of J E Stover Photography

A joyous moment—walking my daughter Rebecca down the aisle at her wedding. On that day she thanked me for interviewing her dates.

[chapter one]

She's Still Your Little Girl

There was a day—it doesn't seem that long ago—when this dating stuff was the furthest thing from her mind, back when her only plans for Saturday night were for us to run barefoot together in the mowed grass, playing freeze tag and catching fireflies.

But it turns out I wasn't the only one who would discover how much fun she is to be around.

This little girl I took to magical places in bedtime stories and amazed with tooth fairy notes now has other male voices telling her things a girl likes to hear. This is when a dad, who's never met a monster he couldn't slay, suddenly feels weak and alone.

She's about to go out on a date . . . with a boy. Just the two of them.

Should I back off? Avoid the subject? Let my wife handle it? Hope I've done enough?

No. My little girl needs me now more than ever.

Dads, I'm calling you to give your daughter the same strength that once kept you treading water at the base of a diving board. The

For most girls your daughter's age, the dating years will lead to heartbreak and confusion, if not utter devastation.

same sense of protection that kept your hand on the back of her bicycle seat. The same love that pulled her toward you when her friends were mean, when her hopes were dashed. And when life was too big, to her, you were bigger.

For most girls your daughter's age, the dating years will lead to heartbreak and confusion, if not utter devastation. Peer pressure and the self-focused nature of needing boyfriends will lead many girls to lose all sense of perspective and make some of the worst decisions of their young lives. That's because most of these girls will be left to

fend for themselves by fathers who are too busy, too uneasy, or too afraid to get involved—too quick to assume that everything will be all right. He may know more about the quarterback of his favorite football team than he does about the young man who's driving away with his daughter tonight.

So I'm glad you're reading this book. I'm proud of you for stepping up and out of the herd of men who say nothing and do nothing. It means—at least I hope it means—that your daughter won't have to be one of those girls harmed by relationships that get out of balance and, ultimately, out of hand. It means you are dead-set determined to bring your best effort to this season of your daughter's life—a time that no dad truly feels ready for.

And it means there's at least one more young man out there who's going to have your help building trust, someone who'll be a true gentleman with your daughter, who'll treat her with dignity, the way you want her to be treated.

But first, it's going to take you being a man, because she's still your little girl. And you're still her dad.



This book is fairly short, on purpose. It won't take long for me to say what I need to say, and I don't want you having to stop and start over for days on end. Chances are, you can finish this before you go to bed tonight, or certainly before the week is out.

In the next few pages I'm going to walk you through a brief but vitally important interview process that will make you a little girl's hero and a young man's coach.

At a time when many parents—perhaps even most—are pulling back from their teenage children, becoming less and less involved in what their sons and daughters are doing, you will find yourself—as I have—growing closer to your daughter and deepening your relationship with her, just when she needs you the most.

She may not admit it, but, Dad, your daughter needs you. And so do those guys who think she's cute, who may have every intention of being honorable and aboveboard with her, but who also have truckloads of male hormones surging through their bodies. You

can be their protector—both hers and his—keeping them on course toward a life of few regrets.



As a dad, I want to assure you that I did not do everything perfectly. I struggled with balancing work and family. There were times when my patience evaporated, and I was angry with disobedient children. I battled my own inconsistency. Like nearly all dads, I have my own list of regrets. Yet one of my happiest moments came in the summer of 2005 when I had the privilege of being the father of the bride, giving my daughter Rebecca to Jacob William Mutz. On that day, Rebecca had some things she wanted to say to her mom and me. I want you to feel some of what I felt as she spoke these words of tribute. Note especially what she said at the end concerning how she felt about me interviewing her dates.

Dad,

You are, and always will be, my Daddy and my chocolate buddy. I can remember times when you would whisper in my ear to follow you and “sneak some chocolate.” I always thought that it was our little secret and our shared moments of bliss. And, of course, it’s where I get my love for chocolate.

You have been a source of courage, strength, and godly character. I always knew I wanted to marry someone like you: a man with virtues, morals, character, integrity, a

heart after God, and a deep reservoir of love to give me all the days of my life.

I remember putting on my best outfit, fixing my hair, putting on a bit of makeup, and hurrying downstairs to wait for my date. You would sneak out the back door and come around to the front and knock. Mom would answer the door and then call for me, “Rebecca, your date is here.” I would walk over, and you would put your arm out for me to take. Then you would escort me to your car and open the door for me, making sure I was safe inside before shutting it. I felt love, honor, and respect in those moments. The rest of the date was a whirlwind, but those moments before and after were the best, as I was taught to wait on you to open all the doors and allow me to walk in front of you. Thank you for showing me what it means to be pursued and treated like a lady.

I could not be more thankful to be standing here today, marrying a man who, is in many ways, like you. What more could I ask for? Thank you for screening all my dates and for doing and saying what you thought was in my best interest, even though it might have been difficult. I cannot tell you how thankful I am for the way you protected me for this moment today. You are a gift from God.

Rebecca Jean “Joy Susie-Q” Rainey Mutz

From one dad to another: It just doesn’t get much better than that!

an essential man-to-man conversation

As a dad, you want to protect your daughter—especially from boys with super-charged hormones. But the thought of talking to these young men can make a man break into a cold sweat. Or reach for a baseball bat.

There is an alternative, though: a one-on-one conversation with every young man who'd like to take her out.

This is more than an interview, it's an opportunity; a chance to set the bar high, to hold your daughter's date accountable for something precious. It's even a chance to build into a young man, communicating to him—and your daughter—the value of a God-honoring relationship.



Dennis Rainey is the president and CEO of FamilyLife, a ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ, and a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary. For more than thirty-five years, he has been speaking and writing on marriage and family issues. He can be heard each weekday on the nationally syndicated radio program *FamilyLife Today*.[®] He and his wife, Barbara, reside in Little Rock, Arkansas, and have six adult children and numerous grandchildren.

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