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父女情深

Chicken Soup for the Father & Daughter Soul

Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen
Nancy Audio, Patty Aubery and LeAnn Thieman

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Introduction

INTRODUCTION

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Few of life's relationships compare to that of a father and daughter. From the first time she grasps his finger to the day he lets her go, their bond deepens. Those dads and daughters who enjoy a close relationship will happily identify with these stories. For others, miles, and sometimes even memories, separate them more than they'd like. These stories of inspiration, hope and healing will rekindle their bond and strengthen their love. *Chicken Soup for the Father and Daughter Soul* can be a fun and loving tool to increase communication, "saying" what may have gone unspoken.

Chicken Soup for the Father and Daughter Soul inspires dads and daughters to embrace these stories and each other, evoking their own memories and deepening their love — proving that none can liken that of a daddy and his "little girl".





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BEING THERE

Children want to feel
instinctively that their father is
behind them as solid as a mountain,
but, like a mountain, is something to
look up to.

Dorothy Thompson





Amanda

It is the very essence of love, of nobleness, of greatness, to be willing to suffer for the good of others.

Spence

She looks like all the rest of them on the volleyball court with her gold number “12” on the purple jersey. Tall, blonde, with incredible blue eyes and a slim athletic build, my fifteen-year-old daughter Amanda, the kid who gets good grades and works her tail off at everything she does, could easily be the cover girl for any teen magazine. My wife, Jackie, and I watch in amazement as she dives for another dig on the court, slides across the floor headfirst until she reaches the ball and sends it flying back over the net as the crowd claps its approval. As the coach calls time-out and the girls hurry to the sidelines, Amanda uses her jersey to wipe her face, like any other kid, but at that moment you can see the scar that runs down the right side of her abdomen and across her belly. She is not like all the rest of them. She has my kidney inside her.

As they huddle off-court, my mind drifts back to September 20, 1988, and the little girl who came into our lives. “Bubs” was her nickname, short for “Bubba Girl,” a name tagged by Jackie’s sister Kim when she first saw the ten-pound, two-ounce infant. At



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first everything was normal with Amanda, but a few months into her life she developed searing fevers, and every visit to the doctor left us more confused. Still, Amanda's toothless grin and shining blue eyes comforted us. Even after throwing up in the doctor's office, she would raise her head and smile as if to say, "Don't worry, be happy!" Her joy was contagious, but our fear was enormous.

Shortly after her first birthday, Amanda was diagnosed with kidney reflux, a common condition that often reverses itself, but without treatment can be very harmful. Her doctors decided, with our approval, to perform a simple outpatient procedure to correct the problem. Surgery was scheduled just before Amanda's fifth birthday. Not long before we were to go to the hospital, the phone rang. It was Dr. Kevin Ghandi, Amanda's nephrologist, with some shocking news. "John, X-rays show that Amanda's right kidney is toxic and making her sick. It has to be removed." The news literally knocked us to our knees. How could this be?

The night before surgery, with Amanda between us in bed, we explained what would happen tomorrow. Amanda listened quietly and simply smiled, then whispered, "Do I get ice cream when it's all over?" Jackie and I looked at each other, wishing it could be that simple, and held her close.

We watched Amanda ride into the operating room, sitting up, with her trusted friend Teddy at her side. The gifted hands of "Dr. Kevin" removed Amanda's ailing organ and took care of the reimplantation of her ureter into the bladder. Everything looked good, but Amanda's optimistic prognosis came with a warning: Someday, she would need a transplant. "Someday" seemed very far away as Amanda held her own, leaving the doctors scratching their heads about how she was able to do so well with only 20 percent of one kidney functioning. We never told them our secret. Each night before Amanda went to bed and every morning



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when she woke up, I would ask her a very important question: “Bubs, what are we going to be today?”

She would answer, “Positive, and my kidney is getting better.” This became a ritual for us, a powerful bridge between the mind and body. Soon “better” became “perfect” and “awesome” and “incredible.” Her strength of spirit displayed itself in her physical condition.

Eight years passed. As Amanda’s body changed, the little kidney grew tired and “someday” was fast approaching. Factors of age and relationship made me the best organ donor candidate, and the doctors ordered more tests. I held my breath, and a small voice inside reminded me of my grandfather’s death from polycystic kidney disease—the same disease that would eventually lead to my father’s death. My sister did not have it, and I had never been tested. I prayed and thought of Amanda’s smiling face. Jackie and I sat with the ultrasound tech in the darkness as she slid the wand over my kidneys, searching for any cysts. She said, “I’m not really supposed to tell you guys, but I see two healthy kidneys in there.” I knew then that a perfect plan was in place and that everything would be all right. It was the closest thing to a miracle I had ever known.

“Someday” turned out to be July 18, 2002. Amanda and I were wheeled into operating rooms at Children’s Hospital at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. My healthy vital organ was removed, and a world-renowned surgeon, Dr. Hans Sollinger, delicately placed it in my daughter’s body. It began making urine immediately! For the first time in her young life, Amanda had a healthy kidney!

When I awoke after surgery, the nurse placed her hand on my chest and said, “Amanda is down at the other end of the room and is doing great. Is there anything you want me to tell her?”

My throat raw from the breathing tube, I croaked two words,





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something she would understand, “Hubba-Bubba,” my usual corny greeting to her. With tears in her eyes, the nurse delivered the unusual message, and Amanda, with eyes closed, did what she has always done: She smiled.

As fathers, we always hope to leave a piece of ourselves with our children. For Amanda and me, the bond goes far beyond the physical into a spiritual trust, a feeling for me that some agreement from long ago has been fulfilled. It is a rare thing to give life to your child not once, but twice. Two years have passed since the procedure, and as I watch her head back out onto the court, she glances my way and gives me a big smile and a “thumbs-up”. I push back the tears and smile back. I am her father, but she is my hero.

John St. Augustine



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Love in a Box

Life is a flower, of which love is the honey.

Victor Hugo

When I was a little girl, I found love in a box all because of a class assignment. On a Friday night I made an announcement at the dinner table. The words bubbled out in a torrent of excitement I could no longer contain. "My teacher said we have to bring a box for our valentines on Monday. But it has to be a special box, all decorated."

Mother said, "We'll see," and she continued eating.

I wilted faster than a flower with no water. What did "We'll see" mean? I had to have that box or there would be no valentines for me. My second grade Valentine's Day would be a disaster. Maybe they didn't love me enough to help me with my project.

All day Saturday I waited, and I worried, but there was no mention of a valentine box. Sunday arrived, and my concern increased, but I knew an inquiry about the box might trigger anger and loud voices. I kept an anxious eye on both my parents all day. In 1947, in my house, children only asked once. More than that invited punitive measures.

Late Sunday afternoon, my father called me into our apartment's tiny kitchen. The table was covered with an assortment





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of white crepe paper, red construction paper, and bits and pieces of lace and ribbon from my mother's sewing basket. An empty shoebox rested on top of the paper. Relief flooded through me when Daddy said, "Let's get started on your project."

In the next hour my father transformed the empty shoebox into a valentine box I would never forget. Crepe paper covered the ugly cardboard. My father fashioned a wrinkled piece of the pliable paper and glued it around the middle. He cut a slot in the lid and covered it with more of the white paper. Next came red hearts attached in what I considered all the right places. He hummed a tune while he worked, and I kneeled on my chair witnessing the magical conversion of the shoebox and handing him the glue when he needed it. When he finished, my father's eyes sparkled, and a smile stretched across his thin face. "What do you think of that?"

My answer was a hug and a "Thank you, Daddy."

But inside, joy danced all the way to my heart. It was the first time that my father devoted so much time to me. His world consisted of working hard to support his family, adoring my mother, disciplining my brother and me, and listening to every sports event broadcast on the radio. Suddenly, a new door opened in my life. My father loved me.

Monday morning, my mother found a brown grocery sack to protect the beautiful box while I carried it to school. I barely felt the bitter cold of the February day as I held the precious treasure close to me. I would let no harm come to my beautiful valentine box.

My teacher cleared a space on a long, wide windowsill where the decorated boxes would stay until Valentine's Day. I studied each one as it was placed on the sill, and none compared with mine. Every time I peeked at my valentine box, I felt my father's love. My pride knew no bounds. There were moments when the



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box actually glowed in a spotlight all its own. No doubt I was the only one who witnessed that glow.

Every day some of my classmates brought valentine cards to school and slipped them into the slots of the special boxes. The holiday party arrived, and we brought our boxes to our desks to open the valentines. Frosted heart cookies, red punch, valentines and giggles filled our classroom. Chaos reigned until dismissal time arrived.

I carried my valentine box home proudly. It wasn't hidden in a grocery sack but held out for the world to admire. I showed it to the policeman who guided us across a busy city street. He patted me on the head and exclaimed about it. I made sure everyone along the way took note of my valentine box. My father had made it for me, and the love that filled it meant more to me than all the valentines nestled inside.

From that time on I never doubted my father's feelings for me. The valentine box became a symbol of his love that lasted through decades of other Valentine's Days. He gave me other gifts through the years, but none ever compared with the tender love I felt within the confines of the old, empty shoebox.

Nancy Julien Kopp

