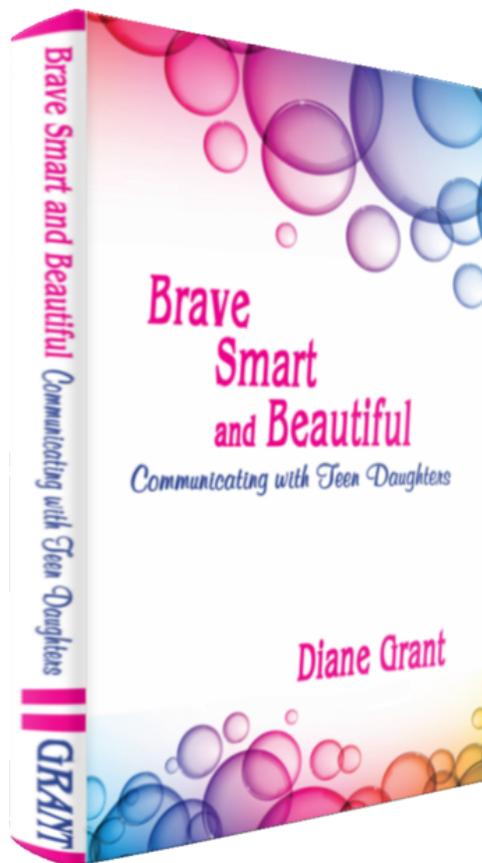


# EXCERPT FROM BRAVE SMART AND BEAUTIFUL by Diane Grant



Looking an adult in the eye while communicating her thoughts is a very impressive habit, a habit we should always encourage. It will set them apart in a positive way from other girls. Especially when going to school or to job interviews, using eye-to- eye contact will convey confidence and get the adults' attention as well as making a positive impression.

In order to help develop good communication skills, a great idea is to encourage our daughters to take a J.R.O.T.C. class (Junior Reserve Officer Training Corp) or a debate class in school. Usually the high schools offer both. There are also some leadership classes for teens that can help build confidence and growth in communication as well.

My husband and I encouraged one of our daughters to join the JROTC program in her public middle school and in high school. After looking at the curriculum, we realized it was not necessarily about the military, it was about leadership. JROTC programs teach discipline and positive thinking that every student can benefit from.

No, our daughter was not pressured by the program or by us to go into any of the armed services. She did however develop a great value system, strong work ethic, learned a lot about keeping her body in good physical condition and how to communicate with confidence. It was truly a beneficial program. Her newly developed sense of self after participating in the program really helped her throughout her life with figuring out what was important and how to stay focused on her goals.

Unfortunately, there are some very dangerous people in this world, and we as Moms want to protect our children from them, often encouraging young children not to talk to strangers. There has to be some kind of middle ground. Otherwise we will create anti-social, paranoid daughters with this kind of thinking. We have to be able to communicate with all people, ones we know as well as those we.

Words are not the only way we communicate. Our facial expressions are one way of communicating without saying any words. It's challenging for me to keep my facial expressions from giving away my thoughts, especially when I do not like what I am hearing. It is good to practice processing the situation before reacting, either with words or facial gestures. At times my expressions are not received the way I mean them to be. This is something that I still have trouble with.

The affections I show with all of my daughters has always come naturally, although verbal communication at times has been difficult. I didn't always know how to communicate my thoughts without my emotions getting in the way. I find it helpful to think things through before reacting.

Communicating is sometimes challenging, but it is well worth the effort. Asking questions that will prompt conversation may be a way of getting our daughters to share their feelings. How we phrase our words can assist in breaking down the barriers our daughters sometimes put up. Asking questions that aren't easily answered with one word answers like, "How was your day?" instead "What did you like best about your day?" Many times we are so eager to hear about their day or about their plans that we push too hard. I don't think it is intentional because we want to be informed. Probably one of the surest ways to have our daughters shut down and tune out is to push too hard.

Think in advance about what words we can use to help our daughters convey their feelings or thoughts. Remember being a good listener is a valuable characteristic we need to practice. Sometimes our daughters may need some quiet time to relax and unwind after a long day. Don't think because they don't want to talk that it has something to do with us. Suggest that they tell us they need some quiet time and will talk with us later. We don't want her to feel as if we are bombarding her, or leave us feeling as though she wants to shut us out.

*About Diane Grant, Author, Speaker, Parenting Coach. Determined to continue to make a difference in young teen lives inspired her to write "Brave Smart and Beautiful, Communicating with Teen Daughters". Not wanting another teen to feel disconnected, lonely or unloved. Amazing accomplishments come from girls who are confident, who love and respect themselves and who have strong, empowering role models to help guide them through the difficulties of teen years. Who better to be that role model, than their Mother?*

Learn more about Diane at [www.BraveSmartandBeautiful.com](http://www.BraveSmartandBeautiful.com)

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