

4 Things Perpetrators Don't Want Fathers to Know

I was just four years old when a teenage hired-hand attempted to molest me. I got away, ran to my daddy and told him--everything. My father made three important choices for me that summer day: he listened to me, he believed me, and he took action. I was one of the fortunate ones. I had a childhood.

But here are the current statistics:

1 out of every 4 girls and 1 out of every 6 boys will be sexually violated by age 18.

90 to 95 percent of those violated will be violated by someone they know and trust.

I believe in fatherhood. **I believe you can minimize the risk of childhood sexual abuse for your children by building a bridge of communication regarding this issue.**

Because of my father's actions, I am not a statistic. Your actions can help you protect your children too.

Here are **4** things you can do:

1. Trade the word *secrets* for *surprises* in your family.

Why? Because children love secrets and so do perpetrators. Instead of planning a surprise party for grandpa where we keep secrets from him, plan a surprise party for grandpa where we plan surprises to tell him at his party. It's a subtle change with a big impact.

Perpetrators target children who can be convinced to keep a secret. A perpetrator must convince your child to keep a secret in order to have any power over your child.

2. Allow your children to practice saying *NO* to hugging and kissing.

Why? Because children are concrete thinkers. If we don't step in and let our kids practice body boundaries and say no to grandma and grandpa, how will they understand that they can say **NO** to others? If we force our children to hug and kiss on command, they **will** hug and kiss on command and there are people we don't want our children to hug and kiss.

Perpetrators target children who don't understand body boundaries and who aren't empowered to say **NO**.

3. Teach your children the proper names for their body parts and that no one is allowed to touch them where their swimsuit covers.

Why? Because children are great at taking our emotional temperatures. If we call a nose a nose, but create silly names for their private parts, our children sense it. We send a strong message to our kids. "You can tell me if your nose hurts, but private parts . . . we don't talk about that stuff." And telling our kids that no one is allowed to touch them where their swimsuit covers gives children a clear boundary.

Perpetrators target children who have no knowledge of their bodies, who don't feel the freedom to communicate clearly regarding their bodies to a trusted adult.

4. Use our FREE resources at RiseAndShineMovement.org. On our website, we have a book on video for girls, Ana's Song, and a book for boys, Bobby Gilliam, Brave and Strong (to be released on video in September 2016). Our stories and discussion questions will help you build a bridge of communication with your children regarding sexual abuse.

Why? Because children learn best through story.

I have heard it said that children listen to mother's words, but they **hear** their father's words.

Why? Perhaps because mothers generally use more words than fathers, women are generally more verbal than men. So kids get used to mamas being mamas and communicating the way mamas do. But when a father steps in, uses his voice, his eye contact, his gentleness, his influence, he's heard in a fresh new way.

And perpetrators don't like **those kind of fathers.**