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A Fathers' Instruction Manual: Understanding How Dad Affects How You Relate to Men at Work and in Your Life

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For every study you find that says that a woman's relationship with men is shaped by her relationship with her father, you find another that says there is no connection.

Logic says that, while her relationship with her father does not decide her relationship with men in her life, she will at the very least learn from the relationship, and use the lessons as a basis to make her own choices.

Does a daughter who feels a sense of connected equality with her father duplicate that sense of equality at work and in her life? Will a daughter of a dominating father adopt a submissiveness that carries over into other parts of her life? Will a daughter taught to be a hard-charging, take-no prisoners competitor with men have trouble adjusting to the necessary give-and-take with the man with whom she shares a home?

Other women learn by watching their parents. Many don't understand what they see.

Some woman's choice in a man will mirror some of her father's qualities. Other times, the choice is the opposite.

Parting thoughts...

- When you are having an issue with a male co-worker, do you ever think about how you worked through issues with your father?
- If you were afraid of your father, do you ever have the same feelings when in conflict with another man?
- How much of your confidence and aggressiveness in dealing with men comes from your father?
- Have you ever thought through a list of how your father is similar to - and different from - a man in your life?
- What are the things you value most in your father and the man in your life have in common?
- What do the things you like least have in common?
- On balance, does your relationship with your father help or hurt your relationships with other men?
- Does it have any effect at all?