

Goeiemore gemeente

Oor twee weke wil ek graag met julle kom gesels oor 'n benadering tot ons kinders se seksuele opvoeding.

Voor ons egter kan dink oor HOE ons vir ons kinders van die seksuele moet leer, is dit verskriklik belangrik dat ons as ouers eers mooi vir onself moet uitmaak WAT dit is wat ons vir hulle wil leer.

Die wêreld het van seks 'n goedkoop kommoditeit gemaak wat vrylik gedeel word met bitter min grense. Tog het God die seksuele as 'n wondelike geskenk vir ons geskep.

Ek wil graag vandag 'n storie vir julle lees wat ek gevind het in Dr James Dobson se boek Bringing Up Girls.

Dit was vir my 'n baie treffende illustrasie wat die waarde van die seksuele so pragtig uitbeeld. Luister vandag en gaan dink in die week wat voorlê wat dit is wat jy glo oor die seks en wat jy graag vir jou kinders daarvoor sou wou leer.

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CHARMING YOUR DAUGHTER

PROVIDED BELOW IS a story you might want to consider sharing with your sixteen-year-old daughter. I found it delightful, and think it might be useful in your family. Enjoy.

The Charm Bracelet

Sweet sixteen had finally come! I never thought I'd make it. But I did. And it was amazing. My parents threw the birthday party of the century, and I had more people over than I could count. The whole day had been awesome. But as I watched the sun begin to set, I knew the best part was soon to come.

It was late in the evening. Confetti had been swept up, helium balloons had started to sag, and gift wrapping had been folded neatly and tucked away for my mom's later use. As I sat at my window studying the dusky sky, Dad peeked into my room with a smile.

"Ready to go, Sweetie?" he asked.

Was that a trick question? I wondered as I scrambled to my feet. I'd been waiting for this night for five long years, and it was finally here! I was now officially allowed to date!

The plan was for my parents and me to go to my favorite restaurant on the night of my sixteenth birthday and officiate

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the agreement, go over standards, and discuss rules and such. And now we were finally on the way.

I sat across from my parents in a quiet corner booth. Having just placed our orders, I figured it was time to get on with it. "So. I can go out with any guy I want to, right?" I squealed, hardly able to contain my excitement.

Mom and Dad chuckled. Dad answered, "Well, we agreed to that, didn't we?"

"Sweet!" I exclaimed, doing a little victory dance in my seat. My parents had held me off for years, but now that the time had come, they would let me date any guy I wanted! Of course they knew I had a good relationship with God and wasn't too short on common sense, either.

"Now wait just a second," Mom interrupted with a smile. "You have to agree to a little something yourself."

I was expecting a lecture of some sort, so I was already prepared. "So what do I have to do now?" I asked, leaning forward on my elbows.

"Just open this," Dad answered, producing a small white box. He gave a mysterious smile.

I hesitated a moment before removing the curly pink ribbon. I slowly opened the lid and saw a beautiful silver bracelet. But not just any bracelet. It was a charm bracelet. And they weren't just any charms. They were gemstones, small but gorgeous. A dozen dainty charms dangled gently.

"Wow." I didn't know what else to say. I wasn't expecting this at all.

"Now you have to understand this isn't just any bracelet," Mom informed me.

"I know," I said. "It is so beautiful!" I studied it closer. There were six small charms alternating with six tinier ones. The smaller ones were a deep blue. Sapphires, I guessed. And the other six were each different. One appeared to be just a rock, one was pink, a white one, a red one, green, and . . . was that a diamond?

"This charm bracelet is symbolic," Dad explained, leaning in closer to study it with me. "It represents you and your purity. This is what will guide you through your dating relationships. Your mother and I can only tell you what's right. We can't make you believe it yourself. Hopefully, this will."

I looked up solemnly. "I'm listening."

"This represents the first time you hold a guy's hand," Mom said, pointing to the gray one. "It's just a piece of polished granite. Seemingly cheap, yes, but it's still a part of your bracelet. This is pink quartz."

Then she gently rubbed the next one between her fingers. "It represents your first kiss."

"This green one is an emerald," Dad continued. "This is your first boyfriend. The pearl is the first time you say 'I love you' to a man other than me."

I giggled. This was so amazing.

"The ruby stands for your first engagement. And the diamond represents the first time you say 'I do,'" Mom finished.

After letting it all sink in, I cleared my emotion-clogged throat. "What do the six tiny sapphires stand for?" I asked.

"Those are to remind you how beautiful and valuable you are to us and to God," Dad replied. "Now here's the hitch in all this, the one and only rule you'll ever have to follow when it comes to dating."

Only one rule. Sounded good. But little did I know . . .

"Whenever you give one of these actions of love—a kiss, an 'I love you,' a hand to hold—you also have to give the recipient the gem to match."

I must've misunderstood. "I have to give him the gem?"

"You have to give it to him," Mom restated.

I was silent for a moment. I thought they must be joking. But they weren't even thinking of cracking a smile.

"But Daddy!" I suddenly shrieked. "These are insanely expensive! I can't just give them away!"

He gave a soft, loving chuckle. "Did you hear what you just said?"

I thought about it.

"Baby, your purity, your heart, they're far more valuable than a few little rocks. If you can't find it in your heart to give away your little charms, I don't think you should be giving away the things they represent."

I could feel my insides melting, ready to gush out my tear ducts. On the one hand, it made me feel valuable and precious. But on the other, it made me furious. It made no sense. But it would.

A few weeks after that night, I was hanging out with my

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friends at the beach. Chad wouldn't swim because I wouldn't swim. I was more interested in reading than getting caked with sand, and he was more interested in sitting with me than swimming with his buddies. He was sweet. He was cute. And he tried to hold my hand.

I was thrilled for a nanosecond when a certain piece of ugly granite flashed through my mind and made me move out of his reach. I was severely annoyed—annoyed at my parents, annoyed at my bracelet-turned-handcuffs, but most of all, annoyed at myself. I was letting a little rock dominate my romantic life.

I furiously glared at it during the whole embarrassing walk to the bathhouse. But then God hit me upside the head with a shocking epiphany. I couldn't give up my little chunk of granite. It was a part of my bracelet, which in a sense made it a part of me. I wouldn't be whole without it. It wasn't a priceless gem, yet it was still valuable. It made sense after that.

Kevin came along eventually. We had fun. We hung out a lot. I thought I might love him. I thought I might tell him so. I thought of my pearl.

It turned out that I didn't love him as much as I thought I did.

So my parents had been right. They couldn't make me believe the things they wanted me to believe. So they let God and my bracelet do the work instead. Among the four of them, I figured out how valuable I was. How valuable my purity was. How not valuable guys were who were just wasting my time and emotions. If they weren't in it for the whole bracelet, why should they get one part of it?

Nate. He thought my bracelet was awesome. So he never tried to hold my hand. He never tried to kiss me. But he asked me to marry him.

I never knew that so many years of torture could amount to so much happiness. I'd thought it was silly. I'd thought it was overrated. But now, I have never been more glad of anything in my life.

As I gave my husband the charm bracelet in its entirety, I wondered why I had found it so hard to hang on to those little rocks when it was so amazing to give them all to the man I truly loved.

But it didn't end there. Now our daughter wears it.¹