interviewing your daughter’s date

30 MINUTES MAN-TO-MAN

SAMPLE CHAPTER

dennis rainey
interviewing your daughter’s date
30 MINUTES MAN-TO-MAN

by dennis rainey
with lawrence kimbrough
Contents

Foreword 1

Chapter One: She's Still Your Little Girl 3

Chapter Two: The Neckline, the Waistline, the “Bottom Line” 9

Chapter Three: Just You and Me, Kid 17

Chapter Four: No Daughter of Mine’s Goin’ Out with a Thing Like That! 29

Chapter Five: Making Men of Boys 43

Chapter Six: It’ll Come Back to You 59

Appendix A: The 30-Minute Interview 67

Appendix B: A Sample Interview 69

Appendix C: A Sample Letter to Your Daughter 79

Acknowledgments 81
I was seated at my desk, barely able to concentrate. I shifted papers, opened drawers, glanced out the window . . . shifted papers, opened drawers, glanced out the window . . . shifted papers . . . I felt like I was expecting an important phone call and was just trying to do something, anything, productive while waiting. But it wasn’t working.

And neither was I.

Finally, my executive assistant informed me that the young man I’d been expecting was waiting for me in the lobby.

Deep breath, Dennis. You’re the adult here. You can do this.

I was about to interview the first of many young men who wanted a date with one of my daughters.

I stood to my feet and walked across the room, still amazed at how nervous I was as I stepped into the lobby to meet Kevin—the only person in the building more anxious and ill at ease than I was.

“Afternoon, Kevin. Glad you could make it.”

“How about we get something from the Coke machine. I hear you’re a Dr. Pepper man.”

“Yes, sir.”

Riding a very thin wave of forced, uncomfortable chitchat, I deposited enough quarters to dislodge a cold can for him and a Diet Coke for me. Then, not wanting to be the
“Ultimate Intimidator,” I suggested we go outside and chat in the parking lot. That's where he showed me his motorcycle—which wasn't exactly how I wanted Ashley to go out on her first date!

I popped the tab on my soft drink and looked squarely into the same eyes that enjoyed looking at my sixteen-year-old daughter. We began with the basics. I asked him about school, his mom and dad, family, and interests—just a general get-to-know-you type of conversation.

I couldn’t believe that my “Little Princess” was already old enough for this. Not my Ashley . . .

I had taken Ashley out myself on numerous occasions when she was younger. I started “dating” her and my other daughters when they were three or four years old.

Sometimes, I’d really try to do it right.

On one specific evening when Ashley was twelve, I pulled into the driveway and met her at the door. Her mother was there to see us off, to inquire about where we were planning to go and when we'd be back. And then we were off.

I, of course, was every bit the perfect gentleman, holding the car door open, ordering for her at the restaurant, and treating her with all the common courtesies a woman should expect from a man.

We just enjoyed ourselves—talking, laughing, and sharing memories. And there were some serious moments, too.

I told her, for example, that I knew she'd one day be asked out by someone much less handsome than her father. (Obviously, we’ve always enjoyed laughing in our family.) We talked in simple terms about what dating really is and about what she should expect.

I also prepared her for the fact that before she could accept a boy’s invitation to go out on a date, I needed the chance to talk to him first. To interview him.

Now, I don’t know what you'd expect a twelve-year-old girl to say in response to that, but Barbara and I have enough kids—they qualify as our own little focus group—to assure you that this sounded like a good thing to all my girls, including Ashley that night. It all sounded normal to her.

But even if she hadn’t said so, I am absolutely convinced that our daughters—both yours
and mine—deeply want this kind of loving attention and protection from us. It makes so many things so much easier on her. It takes a lot of worry off her mind, knowing that Dad is watching her back, keeping her safe by doing his job.

So when the time finally came for Ashley to be asked out by a real live boy, it was only natural for her to say to him, “My dad needs to talk to you first.”

That’s my girl.

“Kevin,” I said, hoping I’d also remember the rest of the words I wanted to say, “God did a wonderful thing when he made women.”

The color fell from his face. This was going to be worse than he had thought. I wondered if at any moment he might hop on that motorcycle and bolt!

I continued. “And, Kevin, God made men and women different. You’ve probably noticed some of those differences.”

Kevin was getting paler by the minute, but he had the presence of mind to nod.

“Actually, God made us different so that men and women would be attracted to one another. Now, Kevin,” I paused for dramatic effect, “You have probably noticed that God made Ashley quite attractive. She’s a really cute girl. In fact, you’ve probably noticed that she has a cute figure.”

This was less of a statement and more of a question. If Kevin said no, he and I would both know he was lying. If he said yes, however, he was admitting to the obvious: that he had the audacity to notice my daughter’s figure! Either way, Kevin was “toast.”

After a brief pause, I spared him the agony and continued.

“I mean, you’re a young man and Ashley is a young lady, and God made men and women to be attracted to one another. It’s good.”

Kevin seemed to be relieved at my pronouncement.

I went on. “And, Kevin, I just want you to know that I am a man, and I understand this attraction. I was once a teenage boy, and I know what teenage boys think about. I’ve even read some research on this, and the studies show that teenage boys think about sex every seven seconds.”
At this point, Kevin’s eyes darted, wondering where I was going next.

“And, Kevin, you and I both know those teenage boys were lying about the other six seconds.”

At this point, Kevin’s eyes began to dilate! There was no dodging this one. “Yes, sir,” he said with a nervous little laugh.

“Kevin, I don’t know how to put this any plainer: I want you to keep your lips and hands off my daughter. And I’m going to help you with that. Because whether I see you at the door after your first date with Ashley—or after your fiftieth date—you can expect me to ask you, ‘Kevin, are you dealing uprightly with my daughter?’ And I want you to know what I mean when I ask you that question. Are we communicating, Kevin?”

“Yes, sir.” His eyes were fully dilated at this point.

I continued. “Kevin, more than likely, Ashley is going to be somebody’s wife someday. And I don’t want you touching her body. Would you want someone touching your wife’s body?”

“No, sir.”

“That’s what I thought. So you and I, we know what we’re talking about when I ask you to be accountable for protecting the emotional and moral purity of my daughter, right?”

He nodded enough to let me know my vocabulary was in his dictionary.

“And, Kevin, I want you also to take this challenge: If God ever gives you the privilege of being a husband and a dad, especially if He gives you girls, I want you to take your role so seriously with them that you’ll talk to your daughters’ dates the way I’ve talked with you today. Will you promise me that?”

“Yes, sir.”

At that point, both Kevin and I were relieved that the conversation was over. I grinned and patted him on the back. I told him I was proud of him for coming to talk to me and allowing me to interact with him around such important issues.

As he was putting his helmet on, he answered one last question by assuring me he’d take Ashley out in a car.
That was it. Took maybe twenty minutes.

And I've done a version of this same thing dozens of times now.

Each interview was a little different. I'll share some of those nuances with you before we're finished. I've learned a lot as I've gone through this. I've learned that there are some very specific things I need to know about each young man, and I try to tailor each of these little talks to the particular situation and the young man I'm dealing with.

In the process, I've met some fine maturing men and seen some interesting things happen along the way.

Here's one that comes to mind. Andy was a young man who had asked to take Ashley to the prom. As I initiated my interview with him, Andy presented me with a Louisville Slugger baseball bat and a black Sharpie pen.

When I asked why he had brought these things, he told me that his dad had sent them so I could write down the major points of what I talked to him about—right there on the barrel of the bat! Andy had a younger sister, you see, who was about to become a teenager, and his dad wanted the outline written down on the bat so he could use it as a cheat sheet for his own interviews with young men—and as a clear visual aid! Andy said his dad intended to hang the bat in the entrance of their home, in fact, as a reminder to all the young men who came to their house.

There was another dad who came with his son to sit in on the interview to observe and be trained. I've also had younger brothers sit in (probably just to see their big brothers squirm).

I even had one young man come to me and say, “Mr. Rainey, I'm not interested in asking any of your daughters out on a date, but I was wondering, would you be willing to take me through the interview?”

I did. He had wanted to go through it so he would know what I said.

It reminded me that young men today yearn for older men to enter their worlds, talk straight with them about how to treat a young lady, and call them to a high standard.

Another dad, Mike, so loved the idea of a father interviewing his daughter's dates, he gave me a baseball bat of my own. He even gave the bat a name and had it laser engraved with two-inch letters etched on the barrel: “The Respect Her.” Today, that bat sits on a
mantel right above my desk at home. Of course, I’m not advocating violence, abuse, or physical intimidation in any way. The baseball bat is meant only as a humorous symbol of a matter I take seriously. I’ve heard stories of dads who would clean their guns when young men came over to take their daughters on dates. Personally, I wouldn’t feel comfortable doing that. The interview is intimidating enough for any young man. I showed the bat to guys after the interview. It always brought a laugh.

I had no idea until recently while talking to my daughter, Rebecca, that our teenage girls used to show off that bat to their friends. She admitted that she would look forward to having her male friends over to the house and taking them on a brief tour, ending up in my office where she would show them “The Respect Her.” Rebecca said she would then tell them that her dad always had to interview her dates. This is the same Rebecca who also pushed back from time to time about “The Interview.” With a teenager, expect a paradox from time to time.

Now if all this seems a bit too intense, if the thought of telling your daughter that you’ll be interviewing her dates makes you break out in a cold sweat—not to mention the prospect of actually doing the interview—let me tell you how my friend Steve handled it the first time. He calls it “Interview Lite.”

When Steve told his two daughters about his plan to interview their dates, they pushed back: “Why do you need to do that? What are you going to say? Will you be kind? Are you going to embarrass us? Are you going to try to intimidate them?”

Steve’s responses let them know that he had given this a lot of thought, so they tried a different approach: “What do you consider a date, Dad? Just hanging out with a guy isn’t really a date, is it?”

If they were looking for a loophole, they didn’t find one. Steve made it clear that a date was anytime a guy and a girl got together—alone, in a group, and most definitely when just hanging out. But to make it easier on all of them, Steve decided to warm his daughters to the idea by interviewing both their dates at the same time.

For both girls, it was their first date, and they had been invited to a homecoming party. They planned to double date, so Steve invited both of the young men to come to his house for a little chat before the date.
When they arrived, he looked at them, smiled, and asked, “Were you nervous when you asked the girls out?”

Both guys volunteered, “Oh, yeah!”

Steve identified with them by telling them how he had nearly had a nervous breakdown the first time he had asked a girl out in junior high. He then went on to say, “The first thing I want to tell you is thank you for having the courage to ask them. Thanks on behalf of their mother and me. You really did us a big favor by asking both of our daughters out!” (It would have been a long evening if the younger daughter had been asked out but the older daughter had not!)

Steve then asked, “Do you know what stewardship is?” He went on. “You see, we don’t own Susie and Emily. We are stewards who have been given an assignment from God to take care of them. And by our letting you take them on a date, we are transferring that stewardship for an evening. You have to keep them safe and healthy and protect their purity.” Explaining further, Steve told them, “If a guy comes into the gym with a gun, then I expect you to be a man and take a bullet for them. Are you guys understanding this stewardship? We want you to know that we are holding you accountable for it. Do you understand?”

When Steve was convinced that the young men understood, he shook their hands, and the four teenagers left for the party.

Later, his daughters asked him what he had said to their dates. When Steve told them, they were relieved and said, “That’s all? That’s great that you’d ask them to protect us like that!” Steve said his daughters’ faces were beaming.

By going “Interview Lite” with the first date, Steve earned the early trust of his teenage daughters, who now think the whole thing is pretty cool.

Guys, I can’t tell you how strongly I feel about this. The statistics don’t lie. Despite a decade of “Just Say No” and countless sermons on “Love, Sex, and Dating,” the sexual conduct of Christian youth growing up in Christian youth groups, worshiping to Christian music, and sitting in Christian Bible studies, is virtually no different than the sexual conduct of any other teenager.
These young men who like what they see in our daughters enough to want to spend time alone with them need us to hold them accountable and call them to restrain their sexual passions. They need older men, dads, to challenge them to protect our daughters and do what it takes to guard their moral purity.

Let’s do it.
The 30-Minute Interview

Use this to remind you of the main points to address in your interview.

1. A woman is God’s creation, a beautiful creation, a fine creation.
   
   You’ve certainly noticed that my daughter is pretty, attractive, and has a cute figure, haven’t you?

2. The attraction of a young man to a young woman is both normal and good.
   
   I’m glad you like her and want to spend time with her.

3. I understand and remember what the sex drive of a young man is like.
   
   Believe me, I’ve been there. I know what you’re dealing with.

4. I’m going to hold you accountable for your relationship with my daughter.
   
   Expect me to be asking to see if you’re dealing uprightly with her.

5. I’m going to challenge you to purity.
   
   I want you to guard her innocence, not just her virginity.

6. I want you to respect and uphold the dignity of my daughter by keeping your hands off her.
   
   Keeping this one precaution in mind will keep you from getting into further trouble.

7. Do you understand all of what I’ve just said to you?
   
   Are we clear on what I’m expecting and what you can expect from me?

8. When you’re a dad someday, I hope you will challenge your own children to abide by these standards and that you will interview your daughter’s dates.
   
   Can I count on you?

My prayer is that you will never forget this conversation. I know I won’t.