The last time I took my older daughter and her friends to see a movie, they were perched in a front row while I sat far away so I would not cramp their coolness. As I came back from the concession stand before the movie started, I witnessed them sitting all in a row with glowing blue faces – texting. Maybe each other. Maybe checking Facebook and Twitter. They were connected to the World Wide Web, communicating with others around the globe. I thought of earlier in the day when my daughter and I had shopped for a swimsuit. Needless to say, our communication was not clear even face to face. Each of us was speaking, but neither of us was listening. With all of our newfangled technology for communicating, this mother and daughter still struggle with it at times.

According to a 2011 A.C. Nielsen poll, the average parent spends 38.5 minutes per week in meaningful conversation with her children. So in a week’s time, most of us spend more time with our favorite TV drama than with our contribution to our future generations. On purpose? Probably not. As moms, we get caught up in the stress of living, so

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we put off the important stuff to focus on the urgent stuff.

Marnie Ferree in No Stones discusses the effects that busy parents have on their children. The results are devastating. Our children have a need to be loved and nurtured by us, just as we have a need to be loved and nurtured by our parents, and ultimately by our heavenly Father. Our relationships with our children influence the relationship they have with our Lord as well.

God patterned our relationships on earth after the heavenly relationships. He has always been. He has seen many generations. He says to be still and know that He is God (Psalm 46:10).

This lesson is one grandparents have learned. The woman who would not allow me to leave the breakfast table until I had finished my oatmeal became a woman who allows my daughter to eat chips and drink soda. She permits jumping on beds and staying up late. What happened to my mother? She has transformed into a grand. And she is still teaching me – teaching me to enjoy the precious gift that God has given me.

My daughter and I may not always speak the same language. We may use a different hair product or accessories, but through it all we know that each loves the other and is doing her best. And more communication is happening than either of us sometimes realizes.

One night as I was tucking her into bed she said, “Mom, God is preparing you for something bigger.” That thought had crossed my mind. And scared me. But I found solace in knowing that my baby was preaching to me. She was connected to her heavenly Father.

Communication is vital – for mothers and daughters, or for the Father and His daughters. Indeed, we are all daughters of the King. And, yes, He can hear us now. 

Portia is a freshman in high school this year. Poppy is an employee of the Sumner County school system, and she and Chris serve as youth volunteers at the Hendersonville Church of Christ. Portia is a freshman in high school this year.

Our Top Ten

A few weeks ago, Portia told me about a list of favorite things that she had to make for school. On the list was “writing.” I smiled when she mentioned it – one way we can each communicate. So, together, Portia and I have created a top ten list of nuggets of wisdom each generation wants the other to know.

Mom’s Top Ten

10. Appearance: Before leaving home, a restaurant, or school, check for: Skirt to modest length. Top to modest neckline. Spinach or lipstick in your teeth. A smile and a happy heart. Be clothed in the armor of God. (Ephesians 6:10-18).
9. Beauty: Acne scars, burn marks, or freckles are the beauty marks of experience and wisdom and character. It is all a matter of perspective. God, our Creator, explains what is beautiful: The incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit . . . is very precious (1 Peter 3:4). Beautiful feet are those that carry the good news (Romans 10:15).
8. Money: Save $10 of every $1. Give $.10 of every $1. He will provide for your every need if you put Him first (Matthew 6:33). When we give, He gives to overflowing (Luke 6:38).
7. Preparedness: Always carry a safety pin, a band-aid, a piece of gum, a small tablet of paper and a pen, and $20. (Cell phones don’t always have signals.) Safety pin: You can correct a wardrobe malfunction, use as a self-defense apparatus, or use with a magnet to entertain children. Band-aid: self-explanatory. Gum: for your bad breath or a friend’s. Pad of paper and pen: ideas and addresses and times of shows – you will not be able to remember it all. $20: you never know when you will need it.
6. Work: Whistle while you work. Blessed are those who enjoy their work (or at least pretend to) (Ecclesiastes 5:18; Philippians 2:14-16).
5. Friend: To have a friend, you must be a friend. David and Jonathan are excellent examples. See also John 15:13.
4. Public Relations: Say less; listen more. Gripe less; thank God more. Let your conversation always be gracious (Colossians 4:6).
2. Happiness: Positives and negatives can always be found in any given situation. Learn to look for the positives. Learn to laugh at yourself. Sometimes we win, and sometimes we learn. Sometimes we succeed, and sometimes we make mistakes. Laughter is like the sugar in the medicine that makes it easier to swallow. Think on things that are good (Philippians 4:8).

Daughter’s Top Ten

10. Appearance: Moms’ ideas of hairstyles and clothing are stuck in the ’80s. Daughters do not want to dress like their moms. Explain why the rules and clothing guidelines are important, so we do not get upset and keep getting into trouble.
9. Happiness: Daughters want to play sports because it is fun – not only for college. It is not all we think about.
8. Money: There are things more important than money.
7. Work: Sometimes we want to be lazy. Just like moms, we get worn out and need a break.
6. Safety: Every person I pass at school, every person in the world is not looking to kidnap me, murder me or rob me.
5. Friends: We will have guy friends whom we do not want to date. We can be just friends.
4. Give: Giving should be something I want to do. Forcing it upon me is not going to encourage me to do it again. Explaining it and encouraging me before I do it will.
3. Preparedness: Sometimes we need to be allowed to make our own mistakes. That is how we learn.
2. Mom relations: Things have changed since you were my age, so we will probably do things you do not understand. But you did things that your mothers did not understand too. Remember what it was like to be misunderstood.
1. Love: When we are angry or disappointed, we are not attacking you personally.

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