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Family & Relationships

Daughters Gone Wild, Dads Gone Crazy: Battle-Tested Tips From a Father and Daughter Who Survived the Teenage Years

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“I went from Bibles, Christian T-shirts, and youth group activities to pink hair, Doc Martens, and punk rock in a matter of a few months. My dad didn’t know what happened,” says the twenty-two-year-old co-author, reflecting back on her teen years and life with father and co-author. Charles likens the trials he and his wife went through with Heather from ages thirteen to eighteen to a storm they had to ride out, sharing nine “life preservers,” bits of wisdom culled from their experience.

The elder Stone, a senior pastor of a 1,000-member church in the suburbs of Chicago who received his doctorate from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, has written articles for ministry and parenting magazines. Heather currently plans to attend nursing school.

The authors feel that their unique perspective (writing about their actual experience) sets this parenting book apart from others. Since Charles is a religious man, there’s a deep emphasis on God and Biblical teachings relevant to the subject.

Offering a unique writing structure, Charles begins each chapter with his view of what was happening (“For Dads”), and Heather follows with her version in “For Daughters.” Their relationship for those years was a true battle of wills and a contest not for the squeamish. Writes Heather: “I know many girls who are just as I was—into drugs, sex, alcohol; in and out of treatment centers for delinquents; and at war with their parents.”

The “life preservers” they supply are simple, common-sense ideas that become more meaningful when fleshed out by the Stones’ real-life story. For example, when the overprotective Charles discovers that his thirteen-year-old daughter has shared a kiss with a boy she just met, he is beside himself. As he waits, stewing, to question her, “I locked and loaded my verbal M-16 with heart-penetrating ammo.” Charles can truly attest to the life preserver that

recommends resisting the urge to turn words into weapons.

There are numerous quotes from the Bible and several references to the story of the return of the Prodigal Son, but the personal story of father and daughter is one that won't easily be forgotten. While Charles writes like a pastor and dad, Heather writes like the typical, angry teen she was, making their book all the more realistic. Brief tips and "prayers" from Heather's mother are included infrequently; it was probably an attempt to include the other parent, but an unnecessary one.

Heather now appreciates her father more and recognizes in retrospect that "to have him absent from my life would have left a gaping hole in my heart."