

Spiritual Tip

When God Gives Direction, Mature Believers Will Confirm It. Ask In Humility.

By Rick Warren

When you think you've heard God tell you something, you might ask yourself, "How do I know if this impression is really from God?"

If you want to know if your impression is from God, you need to ask, "Does my church family confirm it?"

You need the wisdom and advice of godly people in your life to help you stay on track. God never meant for you to go through life on your own. That's why he created the church!

We need each other. Nobody has all the answers. Nobody has it all together. Nobody knows the right decision every time. That's why we need a church family. We need spiritually mature friends to bounce ideas off of and get feedback from.

Ephesians 3:10 says, "[God's] intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known" (NIV).

If God has genuinely spoken to you, then other mature believers will confirm it. If they don't confirm it, you have every reason to doubt whether it's really from God.

If you feel resistant to even sharing the impression, where do you think that resistance is coming from? It's coming from the devil. It means it's not from God, because God would not have a problem with you sharing an idea from him. He wants us to learn from each other, to share with each other, to get the wise counsel of each other.

I've been a pastor for many, many years. I've talked to thousands of people. I have concluded that the two biggest reasons people mess up in life are that one, they have no spiritually mature friends, and two, they don't listen to them even if they do have them.

The Bible says in Proverbs 11:9, "The wisdom of the righteous can save you" (GNT). It doesn't say the wisdom of your best friends. It says the "wisdom of the righteous" — in other words, people who have been walking with God longer than you. They're not perfect, but they are making an effort to grow, and they're sincere. What do they save you? They save you time, money, energy, and they save you from mistakes, failure, and danger. That's why you need other, mature believers to help you know if an impression is from God.

Talk It Over

- Who are the people in your life who you can share your impressions with and who will give you biblical counsel?
- What keeps you from sharing with other believers about your spiritual questions and your relationship with God?
- Would other believers say they can freely share their ideas and impressions with you? Why or why not?

Marriage Tip

No. 92

9 Things Your Husband Is Always Thinking About – Part 1

By Dave Willis

One of the greatest challenges in marriage is navigating the differences between the typical male thought process and the typical female thought process. God (in His wisdom and His sense of humor) gave men and women very different perspectives. When these differences are understood, the husband and wife can harmonize with each other and see the world with more depth and perspective than either can do alone.

To help you ladies understand the mind of your man, I've listed below the main things that seem to dominate our thoughts. I hope these insights spark some rich conversations in your marriage. Since I'm obviously not an expert on what women think, I'm going to try to talk my amazing wife, Ashley into sharing the secrets of a wife's thoughts on her blog.

If your husband is like most guys, his thoughts are probably dominated by...

(In no particular order)

1. Concern for your happiness.

This one might surprise you, but most husbands can never be happier than they believe their wife is. Your happiness, contentment and joy is of the utmost importance. Sometimes our own selfishness and pride gets in the way, but your happiness is a consistent thought. When you are unhappy (or you seem unhappy), we'll try to figure out how to make it right.

2. SEX.

This one probably isn't a shocker, but we actually think about sex even more than you think we do. It dominates our thoughts. In fact, most of us wish we could dial down our mental sex drive. We'll often gauge the health of our marriage based on the health of our sex life.

3. How to achieve more.

Most guys are results-driven, and even if your husband has achieved "success" in life, chances are he still feels like he doesn't measure up in certain areas. Men can be (to a fault) driven to achieve. Engage with your husband in conversation about his goals and dreams and remind him that healthy relationships, not trophies or money, are the ultimate measure of success. We guys need to be reminded of this often.

4. Searching for peace.

Men tend to crave silence and solitude in a way most women do not. Men tend to mentally recharge through silence and contemplation while women tend to recharge through conversation and engagement. Again, these are generalizations which don't apply to every individual, but I've observed them to be true in a majority of couples. (continued next week)

Parenting Tip

To The Parents Raising The “Bossy” Girl

By **Stephanie Nelson**, The Child Whisperer Blog Manager. She's a TYPE 4 mom (from the 4 energy types).

“Stop being so bossy!”

I heard this all the time while I was growing up.

The first few times, I didn't even know what it meant. After a while, I felt ashamed of being called “bossy” and tried to do what I could to avoid hearing it.

But when you're a kid, how do you avoid being yourself?

I didn't know what it was about me that earned the “bossy” label and so I didn't have the first clue how to stop it.

Now that I am a parent myself, I've spent a lot of time reflecting on my own childhood and thinking about how I was parented.

As a little girl I know that my mother struggled to understand me and help me embrace and cherish my more bold, opinionated nature in a positive way (which I now understand is a natural expression of TYPE 4 Energy).

Even though my mom made some mistakes since she didn't have this information, I always knew that she loved me. Today she's my best friend.

If you're the parent of a naturally “bossy” girl, I hope that these 5 insights and tips from my own experiences will help you to understand and support your TYPE 4 little girl a bit better.

1. Your daughter is not trying to control anyone!

As a very young girl, she's not being manipulative. She isn't hatching a master plan to be in charge of the family or the classroom or her friends. If actualized, that sort of responsibility would overwhelm her!

She doesn't understand the concept of being “bossy” until people start calling her that. She truly just thinks that her ideas are the best and everyone else will just agree with her.

In fact, it can come as a surprise to her that her young peers have opinions themselves. And it's easy for her to just dismiss their thoughts and feelings for the sake of the bigger picture, whatever it might be at the moment.

You can support your daughter by privately explaining to her that just like she has opinions and desires, so do other people. Assume she cares about people. You can practice this with her interactions with her siblings or friends.

Say something like, “Honey, I know you don't want to hurt people's feelings and that you care about your friends. It would be kind of you to show your love by allowing your friend to pick the next activity.” Or “How would it make you feel if your brother said that same thing to you?”

Realize that this conversation may need to happen many, many times before she begins to understand. Patiently repeat this concept as much as she needs. Your patience with her as she learns to be more empathetic will go a long way!

2. Your daughter doesn't realize how she is coming across.

In her view, especially as a little girl, she thinks she is just speaking the truth.

One snowy winter day when I was in first grade, I organized a snow sculpture contest. I created teams out of the kids in my class and then acted as overseer and judge of the contest (of course!) One girl, a grade older than me, wanted to play with us. But my contest was just for my class. That was the rule I created and so I told her she couldn't join us.

The girl was very hurt and her mom called my mom that evening to complain about how “mean” I had been to her daughter. My mom approached me about the issue after she hung up the phone and I remember feeling really helpless. She doesn't like conflict at all so a phone call from a very angry mom was extremely difficult for her. I know she struggled to help me see how I was coming across to others.

In retrospect, I clearly see why this girl and her mom were upset. But my intention was not at all to be mean. She simply didn't fit the criteria for the contest and it was nothing personal.

In situations where you as a parent are confronted about something your daughter did or said that hurt another person, I encourage you to hear her side of it before you implicate her. If you find that she really had no intention to hurt someone, please stand up for her. It may be appropriate for her to apologize for how she came across to her friend or to sympathize with her friend's pain, but never make her apologize for being herself! And if she is made to apologize for “being mean” or for “being bossy,” she may grow to believe that she IS mean or bossy and she will just create more of that!

Also, your proven loyalty to her and your commitment to believe the best about her will endear her to you. That's a huge investment in her teenage years when she will need an ally and when you will want her to be close to you!

3. Your Type 4 girl is literal...and I mean literal!

If you say “jump” she will probably say “how high?” But she might first actually jump. This means that she might not understand instructions that aren't given clearly, in a black and white way. She's not ignoring you. She

might just need more clarity or support seeing the bigger picture.

Try to see her ability to be very literal as a strength instead of getting frustrated by it. She can think clearly, and eventually she will probably be quite articulate. She might struggle a little bit reading between the lines, but you can support her to read social cues better. When she's old enough to reason with, try explaining situations to her in order to show her what was going on that she might not have picked up on. See yourself as her coach in this area. This is best done in private, and even better if the situation didn't have anything to do with her.

4. She dislikes being put on the spot.

On this one, she may never “grow out of it.” This is not a sign of insecurity for her. She usually knows what she wants and thinks, and she may not mind sharing it in a group. But she needs advance notice so it can be on her terms.

This also includes teasing that may embarrass her.

Once in my elementary years, a boy in my class had a crush on me but I didn't care for him like that and the attention felt embarrassing.

To make it worse, my dad, who loves to tease, got wind of it and one evening as we sat down for dinner, he broke out into song: “Stephanie and (boy's name) sitting in a tree...K-I-S-S-I-N-G....”

Even though he did it just in front of me, my mom and my little brother, I was mortified. And to this day I remember where we were, what we were eating and that I felt I couldn't trust my dad with personal details anymore. (I have since grown to trust him!)

Friendly teasing can be a healthy aspect of a relationship, but be mindful that your TYPE 4 daughter most likely doesn't appreciate it in the same way that other Types of children might. If you notice that's she's the center of unwelcome attention, support her in her need to get away from it. Let her know that you are there for her and encourage her to be true to herself and listen to her own intuition.

5. If there's a chance you can't keep a promise, don't make the promise.

Your daughter is a big-picture thinker and she will ask for big-picture plans. Possibly every day.

My mom used to just tell me what the plan was in the morning before I asked, with a warning that things may change.

That was good enough for me!

However, on a more serious note, don't make promises about things where you can't control the outcome.

My parents never really got along very well. By the time I reached junior high, they fought all the time. After a fight one day I asked my mom if they were going to get divorced. She promised me that they would never get divorced. Yet, they did a few years later.

I know now that she was just trying to console me — she didn't want me to worry about their marriage. And I know she hadn't planned to get divorced.

But all I could see for a lot of years was a broken promise. It took many more years for me to work through the wounding that came from it.

Be honest with your daughter, depending on her age. If you don't know the answer to something, simply tell her that you don't know but whatever outcome happens, your love for her will never change.

Welcome her need to know what her day/week/year will look like. If she's interested, consider getting her a big calendar so she can see the whole year ahead of her. When she's young, just tell her your plan for the day every morning. Even if you aren't a planner, giving her a few things that you know you'll do that day. It will be very supportive to her!

The one thing I want to bring home for you, dear parent, is that you will make mistakes raising this little girl.

All of us parents do!

Reading The Child Whisperer and learning about Energy Profiling has given me tools to accept the way God made me, forgive past hurts from my parents, and inspire me to be intentional in my own parenting.

I realize that your daughter's energy can be intimidating. But she's still just a little girl who needs her Daddy and Mommy to make it abundantly clear that there's nothing she could do to make you love her less.

Make sure she knows whatever comes up in life can be sorted out. But your love for her is a constant that she can count on.

Check the website: www.thechildwhisperer.com for more insights for raising other girls: (1) TYPE 1 The “dreamer” girl, (2) TYPE 2 The “shy” girl, and (3) TYPE 3 The “louder” girl.

Compliments of

Jim and Hiromi Stephens, Marriage and Family Ministry

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