

## OPENING REFLECTION

Not too long after my daughter was born, I (Jenna) reached out to my cousin Dana for parenting advice. With four kids all grown and out of the house, she had years of parenting experience. I had days. I was desperate for her wisdom.

She sent me an email listing morsels of wisdom that I quickly gobbled up. She told me to be silly, get dirty, and play dress up. She told me to pray, pray, pray. She told me to sleep anytime I could and spend quality, uninterrupted time with my daughter.

And then there was this one: *Find your poker face*. When my daughter falls down and hurts herself, she will cry a lot less if I respond with a calm face rather than one that shows fear. Fast-forward fifteen years. She may walk in the door, tears running down her face, confessing something I thought my innocent baby girl could never do. If I respond with calmness, she may share more. But if I react in fear, she may retract.

*Find your poker face and practice it*, Dana wrote.

I have to admit I was once that fifteen-year-old girl, confessing something my parents never imagined I would do. And I'll never forget my dad's response. He didn't react with yelling or instant punishment. Instead, he calmly held me as I cried. He reassured me of his love for me. And then he did something interesting. He told me to promise him that if I ever found myself in a similar situation again, to call him and he would come and pick me up. Dad knew the trial would probably resurface, and when it did, he wanted to be with me.

The calmness of my dad's response was contagious. My fifteen-year-old self calmed down. I knew I could share anything with him and still be loved.

We have a heavenly Father who is with us through every trial. And he invites you and me to talk to him about each one. So the next time you look into the face of a problem, look into the face of your Father. He will never react with impatience or condemnation. Only gentleness.

Lucado, Max. *Anxious for Nothing Study Guide* (pp. 34-35). Thomas Nelson.