

BONUS # 4

Mother-Son & Mother-Daughter Connection Guide

*Simple Traditions and Activities That Keep Your Bond
Strong Through Every Season*

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A COMPANION
TO WHY MY
ADULT CHILDREN
STILL CALL ME
FIRST



*Stronger
Bonds
Brighter
Tomorrows*

Why Individual Time Matters

With three children, it would have been easy to let all of our time together happen as a group — family dinners, family outings, family everything. Those moments mattered. But somewhere along the way, I became intentional about something else: one-on-one time with each child, separately, on a semi-regular basis.

Individual time isn't a lecture and it isn't an interrogation. It's just two people, doing something ordinary together, with nowhere else to be. Children reveal the most important things during relaxed, unstructured moments — not when they're being questioned. Over the years, this became one of the quiet habits that kept our relationship strong through every stage: childhood, the teenage years, and now adulthood.

This guide is a working list of the traditions and activities that helped me stay close to my sons and my daughter, organised by the season we were in. Take what fits your family and leave the rest — the goal was never the specific activity. It was the consistency of showing up.

The Early Years

Roughly ages four to ten — when connection is built through play

At this age, almost anything becomes a tradition if you repeat it. I turned hard homework topics into games and songs, because a child who is laughing is a child who is still listening. The activity mattered less than the fact that it was ours.

WITH YOUR SON

- A standing Saturday morning activity that's just the two of you — a walk, a simple cooking task, building something together.
- Turn one everyday chore into a shared game with a silly reward at the end.
- Let him teach you something he's learned, even if you already know it — children love being the expert for once.

WITH YOUR DAUGHTER

- A simple bedtime ritual that's hers alone — a song, a made-up story you continue night after night, a specific goodnight phrase.
- A recurring “special errand” together, even something as small as a weekly grocery trip, just the two of you.
- Let her choose one thing each week that you do her way, with no correction.

The Tween and Teen Years

*Roughly ages eleven to seventeen — when connection
has to earn its place*

This is the season where many parents feel their child pulling away, and it's tempting to let individual time slip because it suddenly feels harder to arrange, or less wanted. In my experience, it becomes more important, not less — it just has to look different. Teenagers often open up more easily side-by-side than face-to-face, which is why some of my best conversations with my children happened in the car.

WITH YOUR SON

- Long drives with no particular destination — conversation flows more easily when you're not making eye contact.
- Respect his growing need for privacy while still protecting a standing block of time together, even briefly.
- Ask about his world — his friends, his interests — without turning it into an interrogation or a lecture.

WITH YOUR DAUGHTER

- A recurring outing that's just the two of you — a meal out, a walk, anything away from the rest of the household.
- Give her more say in what you do together during this season, even if it's not your first choice.
- Let disagreements happen without letting them end the relationship — make it clear you can talk things over, even when you don't agree.

The Adult Years

When the relationship has to survive distance, not just growing up

One of my sons has lived thousands of miles from home for years now. Distance changes what individual time looks like, but it doesn't have to end it. What mattered most in this season wasn't the length of our conversations. It was the consistency of them.

I don't think my children call me because I have all the answers. I think they call because they know I will listen.

KEEPING THE BOND ALIVE AT A DISTANCE

- Call regularly, not only when there's a problem to solve — ordinary check-ins matter as much as important conversations.
- Ask about their world before offering advice about it. Understand first.
- Say “I love you” on every call, without exception, whether things are going well or badly.
- Let them lead some conversations without you steering toward a lesson or a piece of advice.

My mission with our relationship in this season shifted from teaching to mentoring — from providing answers to helping

them think. I still give advice when it's asked for. I try not to give it when it isn't.

PARENT REMINDER

“The activity was never really the point. Showing up, again and again, was.”

With love,

Demi F. O.

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