**A Promise Kept**

In a world where so many lives are being torn apart by divorces and heartaches, comes a story of a father and a daughter, and a promise that was kept.

My father was not a [sentimental](http://dict.qsbdc.com/sentimental) man. I don't remember him ever "ooohhing" or "ahhing" over something I made as a child. Don't get me wrong; I knew that my dad loved me, but getting all mushy-eyed was not his thing. I learned that he showed me love in other ways.

There was one particular time in my life when this became real to me...

I always believed that my parents had a good marriage, but just before I, the youngest of four children, turned sixteen, my belief was sorely tested. My father, who used to share in the chores around the house, gradually started becoming [despondent](http://dict.qsbdc.com/despondent). From the time he came home from his job at the factory to the time he went to bed, he hardly [spoke](http://dict.qsbdc.com/spoke) a word to my mom or us kids. The strain on my mom and dad's relationship was very evident. However, I was not prepared for the day that Mom sat my [siblings](http://dict.qsbdc.com/siblings) and me down and told us that Dad had [decided](http://dict.qsbdc.com/decided) to leave. All that I could think of was that I was going to become a product of a divorced family. It was something I never thought possible, and it grieved me greatly. I kept telling myself that it wasn't going to happen, and I went totally [numb](http://dict.qsbdc.com/numb) when I knew my dad was really leaving. The night before he left, I stayed up in my room for a long time. I prayed and I cried and I wrote a long letter to my dad. I told him how much I loved him and how much I would miss him. I told him that I was praying for him and wanted him to know that, no matter what, Jesus and I loved him. I told him that I would always and forever be his Krissie...his Noodles. As I folded my note, I stuck in a picture of me with a saying I had always heard: "Anyone can be a father, but it takes someone special to be a daddy."

Early the next morning, as my dad left our house, I [sneaked](http://dict.qsbdc.com/sneaked)out to the car and slipped my letter into one of his bags.

Two weeks went by with hardly a word from my father. Then, one afternoon, I came home from school to find my mom sitting at the dining room table waiting to talk to me. I could see in her eyes that she had been crying. She told me that Dad had been there and that they had talked for a long time. They decided that there were things that the both of them could and would change and that their marriage was worth saving. Mom then turned her focus to my eyes.

"Kristi, Dad told me that you wrote him a letter. Can I ask what you wrote to him?"

I found it hard to share with my mom what I had written from my heart to my dad. I [mumbled](http://dict.qsbdc.com/mumbled) a few words and [shrugged](http://dict.qsbdc.com/shrugged).

Mom said, "Well, Dad said that when he read your letter, it made him cry. It meant a lot to him and I have hardly ever seen your dad cry. After he read your letter, he called to ask if he could come over to talk. Whatever you said really made a difference to your dad."

A few days later my dad was back, this time to stay. We never talked about the letter, my dad and I. I guess I always figured that it was something that was a secret between us.

My parents went on to be married a total of thirty six years before my dad's early death at the age of fifty three cut short their lives together. In the last sixteen years of my parent's marriage, I and all those who knew my mom and dad witnessed one of the truly "great" marriages. Their love grew stronger every day, and my heart [swelled](http://dict.qsbdc.com/swelled) with pride as I saw them grow closer together.

When Mom and Dad received the news from the doctor that his heart was [deteriorating](http://dict.qsbdc.com/deteriorating) rapidly, they took it hand in hand, side by side, all the way.

After Dad's death, we had the most unpleasant task of going through his things. I have never liked this task and [opted](http://dict.qsbdc.com/opted) to run errands so I did not have to be there while most of the things were divided and boxed up.

When I got back from my errand, my brother said, "Kristi, Mom said to give this to you. She said you would know what it meant."

As I looked down into his outstretched hand, it was then that I knew the impact of my letter that day so long ago. In my brother's hand was my picture that I had given my dad that day. My unsentimental dad, who never let his emotions get the best of him; my dad, who almost never outwardly showed his love for me, had kept the one thing that meant so much to him and me. I sat down and the tears began to flow, tears that I thought had dried up from the grief of his death but that had now found new life as I realized what I had meant to him. Mom told me that Dad kept both the picture and that letter his whole life. I have a box in my home that I call the "Dad box". In it are so many things that remind me of my dad. I pull that picture out every once in a while and remember. I remember a promise that was made many years ago between a young man and his bride on their wedding day, and I remember the unspoken promise that was made between a father and his daughter.

**Exercise:**

**Questions:**

1. What signs showed the relationship between the writer’s father and mother was intense?
2. What’s the father’s reaction when he read the letter the writer wrote to him?
3. What was the father-and-mother relationship after the letter?
4. Why did the writer cry after she saw the picture and the letter she once gave her father?
5. What is the promise kept between father and daughter?
6. Does the article move you? How? (open-ended question)

**Answers for reference**

1. The father, who used to share in the chores around the house, gradually started becoming [despondent](http://dict.qsbdc.com/despondent). From the time he came home from his job at the factory to the time he went to bed, he hardly [spoke](http://dict.qsbdc.com/spoke) a word to the mom or the kids.
2. He cried.
3. The father and the mother became closer and their love grew stronger.
4. Because her father, an unsentimental man, never showing outwardly his emotions, kept the daughter’s picture and letter his whole life.
5. They never talked about what was written in the letter.