



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Raising Gender-Confident Kids— Part 1

Guest(s): Dr. Jeff Myers and Dr. Kathy Koch

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Dr. James Dobson: Hello everyone. You're listening to Family Talk the radio broadcasting ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. James Dobson and thank you for joining us for this program.

Roger Marsh: Well welcome to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh and you know the battle for the hearts and minds of our kids and our grandkids is so prevalent and is continuing to intensify. Now, this is something of course Dr. Dobson has been speaking out about for years and years, and he even wrote a book about it. This came out in 1990 called *Children at Risk* and now like never before, the battle is ramped up specifically with the issue of gender identity and kids in school as young as kindergarten are being targeted. While our guest today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk are in the middle of this fight and they have a mission to equip parents to fight this battle. They are Dr. Jeff Myers and Dr. Kathy Koch. Dr. Jeff Myers is president of Summit Ministries, which is based right here in Colorado. As an educator and entrepreneur, he is a well-regarded authority on youth leadership development and training. He's the author of 14 books including *Understanding the Faith*, *Understanding the Times*, and *Understanding the Culture* textbooks, which are studied by tens of thousands of students. Dr. Kathy Koch is the founder and president of Celebrate Kids Incorporated. It's a ministry that exists to equip and encourage parents to raise godly children who understand their purpose, and that is so important in this crazy world that we're living in right now. Kathy has influenced thousands of parents, teachers, and children in over 25 countries through keynote messages, seminars, chapels, and other events. Dr. Kathy Koch is the author of numerous books including *Screens and Teens*, *8 Great Smarts*, and *Resilient Kids*, and together Dr. Jeff Myers and Dr. Kathy Koch have written a brand new book. It's called *Raising Gender-Confident Kids: Helping Kids Embrace Their God-Given Design*, which will be the topic of our conversation today. Jeff and Kathy, you are both been on Family Talk before, but welcome back to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Dr. Jeff Myers: Thank you, Roger. We just love your show and we love the Dobsons and I'm very excited to be with you today.

Dr. Kathy Koch: Definitely.

Roger Marsh: Well, this is so interesting to hear when so many parents are coming to us, they're coming to you and they're asking about this area of the war on kids. It

comes to gender and specifically with Celebrate Kids and Summit Ministries. Do the parents that are coming to you feel equipped or are they coming up and throwing up their hands and saying, "help, Kathy, Jeff. What do I do?"

Dr. Kathy Koch: Yeah, more of the help, right? They're putting up the flare like, here I am, help me now. And that's the motivation for the book, to really give parents hope and to give them wisdom, to give them answers to the questions that we know they have. In fact, I think we're answering questions they don't even know they have because the issue really is so complex and frightening in a way, and we don't want parents or grandparents parenting or grandparenting out of fear. That's not appropriate. It certainly isn't biblical, so we appreciate your help to get the word out so that we can be equipping people with truth, wisdom, hope, compassion, confidence, and all the things that we think they need.

Roger Marsh: Is there a number one question that parents are asking in particular, or is it just kind of a barrage of "Help. I never imagined having to have this conversation with my kids, so I don't know what to do."

Dr. Jeff Myers: I think that's a great question, Roger. Well, I don't know if there's a number one question, but there is certainly a primal fear. There are a lot of parents today who realize the culture views the issue of gender in a completely different way from when we were growing up.

Dr. Jeff Myers: Young adults, they're 1600% more likely to identify as transgender than people who were in their fifties or above. And when you look at the numbers, it's extraordinary, but parents are dealing with this, grandparents are dealing with it. I had one grandmother tell me, "I have 13 grandchildren, they all went to Christian camp when they were growing up. Five of them now identify as transgender." We were talking to one family, Stephanie and I, and their daughter said she needed to switch to a different school and we asked why. She said, because I was the only girl left in my class. All of the other girls in her class said they were boys stuck in girls' bodies and they were transitioning to be boys. This was a middle school girl. And so parents are looking around thinking, oh my word. I don't know what to do. Well, every crisis, as you know, is an opportunity. Every confusion is an opportunity, and the opportunity for us is how do we help our boys become godly men and our girls become godly women without feeling like they have to fit into certain cultural stereotypes to do so?

Dr. Kathy Koch: That's so well expressed, Jeff. One of the questions that I've heard a lot, which makes me so sad is the question, what did I do wrong? And of course, we don't want parents to feel guilt. They didn't know that this was coming. Most parents are doing the very best that they know how to do with the information and the wisdom and the love that they have. So again, we'd love to come beside them and say, look, it came out of nowhere in many respects. It's confusing and all these things, so let's give you hope and let's not look back with shame and regret. Let's go forward with hope, and that's really important to us and I know that that's so important to you.

Roger Marsh: Kathy, you've written about something that we refer to now as gender confidence, and I think it's important for, we used to think, okay, there's the big talk that you have when boys and girls discover that they're different, usually on the playground or somewhere around kindergarten, and then as you get into adolescence and you past puberty and everything like that, you can see the differences that are obvious, but more and more kids are asking the question, if I feel like a girl, am I really a girl? If I feel like a boy, am I really a boy? You talk about gender confidence. Help us understand what that means.

Dr. Kathy Koch: The first answer that we would give you is that gender confidence is a confidence in God. It's a confidence that He is good to us and that specifically He's a good, intentional, strategic, and loving and personal Creator. He didn't throw spaghetti against the wall to see what would stick.

He thought us into existence. We read that we were once a lump of clay in Isaiah 64 verse eight, and He molded us as our potter into exactly who we are. Or I love the Psalm 139: 13 and 14. I think a lot of women memorized that before they even conceive their first child, that God is going to be the Creator of any child that they're privileged to conceive and knitters, that's a precise skill. No knitter decides after they start what they're going to make. Otherwise you have a scarf, Afghan sweater, mitten hat, non-thing that's ugly with no purpose. God knows what He's doing, and Genesis 1:27, maybe the first thing that we learn about ourselves is that we have gender and it is male or female, so gender confidence is a confidence in God.

Roger Marsh: Yeah, that's interesting. I was thinking, Kathy, if you were sharing that God did not cross stitch us together. He knits us together, right? I mean, that's my knitting experience is my mom was really into cross stitch for a while, so I tried it one time. I went, well, this is easy. You just poke the hole. It's all marked out there and all it's colored by numbers. The knitting part is way more intricate because I've been on the receiving end of a lot of donations at our church. They came out looking just kind of funky and interesting. What is that again? That's a scarf? No, it's a hat. Oh, sure. Okay. I'm with you on that. But the precision that goes into that, I mean that confidence that God did not make a mistake. I think that's huge for parents to be able to underscore to their kids who are thinking, well, maybe there's something wrong with me. And Jeff, as you mentioned, a whole classroom full of girls decided to transition, which is horrifying and yet very sobering all at the same time.

Dr. Jeff Myers: Kathy mentioned Genesis 1:27. I would emphasize this: over and over again, we know that we are made in God's image. Every single human being bears God's imprint, His image, but the very first thing we know about human beings after that is they were made male and female. These were the kinds of human beings that there are. If you were looking at the cat kind, you might have tigers, you might have lions. Well, the old-fashioned word for kind that was used in biology was Gnosis or Geneis or Genesis. It is the word from which the word gender comes. I had a friend who got, he said, "You should have talked to me before you titled that book, because gender is a fake word." It isn't a fake word. It is a

legitimate word from hundreds of years ago that has been redeployed to meet the needs of a radical ideology. And that radical ideology says there is no ultimate truth that can be known by us. Well, that's very hard because it's, there aren't just one or two differences between males and females. There are 6,500 catalog differences between males and females. If you want to get people to believe there's no such thing as truth, you have to somehow dispense with the idea that God made two genders. So people will say, "Oh, there are 68 genders or there's a gender spectrum and everybody is kind of transgender because none of us are really G.I. Joe or Barbie." All of this is a lie. The people who are advocating for it know that there is no evidence for it, and yet they continue to teach it because it serves the interests of the false worldviews they're promoting.

Dr. Kathy Koch: Bingo. It's really well stated.

Roger Marsh: I was going to say, Kathy is an educator too, that's got to just make your skin crawl a little bit. I mean, in terms of the fact that there are people who are willfully spewing these lies and this hatred toward children of all people. I mean in the formative years.

Dr. Kathy Koch: How much time do we have? I mean, I founded a ministry called Celebrate Kids because children deserve to be celebrated. They're not the forgotten generation. In the time of Christ being on earth, they were totally celebrated. The men, the learned men, the authorities said, who among us is the greatest? And He called up a child. Imagine them talking among themselves. Did He hear the question right? There's no way He heard the question, right? No, children need to be celebrated. He says we should be like children in a lot of ways. So no, both of us and our ministries are concerned. That's why we wrote the book. We want to save people. We want to save families. We want to stop the nonsense. One of the things we write about, Jeff, that I think was really important is that gender dysphoria isn't really very common. Gender dysphoria, a clinically diagnosed severe...

Dr. Jeff Myers: Incongruence.

Dr. Kathy Koch: Incongruence. Right. And that's not true. Most kids have to learn to be comfortable being uncomfortable. We can't run. I was too tall as a kid. What are my parents going to do? Cut six inches off between my knee and my ankle? No, they helped me change my attitude toward the things I did not want. And we want to empower teachers, social workers, parents, pastors, grandparents, listen to your children, talk with your kids. We have, as you know, we have 200 conversation starters in the book. Conversations change everything. We want kids to be free to talk to people to say, I don't like this part of me. And we really believe that if they will live long and be strong, they will. Most of them will grow out of what's making them uncomfortable today, but then we have to control who they listen to and who they follow. And there's just much to be stated about that.

Dr. Jeff Myers: That's right.

Dr. Kathy Koch: But we know that most kids, if we don't follow the ideology, are going to be just fine.

Dr. Jeff Myers: Roger, we wrote this book to prevent the struggle from those families. Now, there are some families listening right now, their hearts are sinking because they have had a child come home and say, I think I was born in the wrong body. Whoever convinced them of that, it is an evil thing to say to a child. It's not saying there's something wrong with your body. It's saying that your body itself as an actual thing is wrong. But that's what happens. And some parents are dealing with that. However, most parents aren't there. They do have children who have friends who are struggling with this, but we all need to begin asking the question, what do we do to help our kids grow into godly young men and godly young women? I mentioned this, we did put together a website on this because we have videos and things like that to teach people as well. It wasn't just the book. So we put together genderconfidentkids.com. Any of your listeners can go to that website. In fact, the donors made it possible for them to get the copy of the book for free at that website.

Dr. Kathy Koch: It's about the influence. It's about the book. So we want people to know.

Dr. Jeff Myers: We want you to come and get a copy of the book. We want it for families that are healthy who want to keep raising healthy kids, and we want it for families who you're noticing the struggle because of your school environment, the church, the sports teams you're a part of and so forth. It is, as Kathy said about conversation, and you can have those conversations with confidence so that your children can have a strong identity in God rather than in the culture around them.

Roger Marsh: Dr. Jeff Myers, Dr. Kathy Koch, our guests today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, talking about that brand new book called *Raising Gender-Confident Kids: Helping Kids Embrace Their God-Given Design*. And we have a link for all the information that Jeff just mentioned along with the book up at drjamesdobson.org. At the beginning of the book, you both illustrate the four postures of engagement as a way of kind of leaning into this. Can you give us a 35,000 foot view of how people typically engage? What's a more effective way to engage this conversation other than just yelling and saying, no, you're wrong, and then storming out of the room, which that would be my natural reaction, I'll be honest with you. Yeah.

Dr. Jeff Myers: That's a natural reaction. If you grew up and you could easily tell the difference between a boy and a girl, and now you find out this rising generation can't see the difference, you want to scream. You want to say, come on, get real. This is crazy what's going on here? But the truth is, whatever the challenges are in the culture of a generation, we have an opportunity to use those challenges to disciple them. But you got to start with compassion. You can't start with this sense of, I can't believe you're even asking that, or don't even talk to me about

that or trying to argue. You will lose every argument with a Gen Zer on this issue. You will lose every argument because they have millions of places they can go on the internet to find arguments supporting this crazy agenda.

And you don't have it. So you got to start with compassion. And you can teach compassion even to a small child, mommy, that man has a beard and he's wearing a dress. Some people are really confused. They're so confused about who they are that they aren't even sure whether they're a boy or a girl. And we treat everybody with dignity. We're respectful and kind to every single person, but we also feel a little bit bad for them because we know how hard that must be to not even know whether you're a boy or a girl. But I want you to know, daughter, that you were made intentionally to be a girl by a loving heavenly Father. He made you just the way He did and I'm so glad. That's compassion in that kind of a conversation.

Dr. Kathy Koch:

Totally. And it reminds me to say to everyone that we know the issue is real, even though we just stated that gender dysphoria isn't as common as people think it is, and a lot of these kids that are trying to transition really don't need to do that. They just need an attitude shift. They need someone to listen to them. They need a better perspective about who God is and why we can trust His love. So we do really need to be compassionate. We need to listen longer. One of the things I love that Jeff just said is that they're confused. We really need to make sure we never say that they're stupid. They're deceived, that the devil's loud. He's pretty good at what he does, even though he's lost. So compassion's huge. And then the hope that comes alongside of that. You can hope in God, here's why. And if people are talking to kids who don't believe in God, we can still hope in God. To the parents and grandparents who are listening, make sure your hope is not in your children. It's got to be in God that He is the rescuer and the Savior and the developer and designer of this all. So hope is real. Truth is so important.

Dr. Jeff Myers:

Yeah, so important. If you think about approaching a difficult situation with a posture of compassion and maintaining hope in the middle of all the hopelessness, then people are open to hearing about the truth and the truth in the situation is the reality of how God made us, but also the reality of the deception that we are often faced with. So helping children understand that our source of truth is in Jesus. And so when we go out into the culture and we see people who are confused, that doesn't mean we have to be confused. If somebody says, well, you should embrace our agenda, we can say, "You know, my mom and dad taught me differently than that, and my conscience tells me that they're right. Look, you are trying to get me to believe something brand new. You don't love me. You don't know me. You don't know anything about me. My parents know me. They love me. They want what is best for me." And that sense of truth that comes from Scripture begins to build once kids understand you're not attacking me, you're wanting to walk alongside of me toward what is right.

Dr. Kathy Koch: And if a parent, Roger, if a parent is listening to us thinking, but oh my goodness, I haven't always told the truth, or I have walked away from hard conversations because I haven't been confident, we get that. And you can apologize. You can say, "Man, this came out of nowhere. I'm so sorry that I've maybe misled you. I should have admitted I didn't know, rather than trying to make something up to feel better about myself and let's research it together." Prayerfully, you're in a Bible believing church where you can trust someone there who's going to help you learn the truth. You're going to come to the Summit website, the Celebrate Kids' website, you're going to read the book, but we get all that. You can't go back except that you can apologize, ask to be forgiven, and then you move forward. We actually make a point in the book, Jeff, that I thought was so fun that you came up with that you can actually use ignorance to your advantage where when a kid comes, because the kids have been, they've been manipulated, they've been to the websites, they've been talking to a school guidance counselor perhaps, so they think they know everything.

And we can say, "Help me understand." We can say, "But what if you're wrong?" And we don't have to have all the answers. We have to have a heart that wants to love while the kids in the middle of their confusion.

Roger Marsh: One of the things you guys write about in this new book, which is so important for us to understand, is at the core of all of this, a lot of kids are looking to establish themselves. They're trying to figure out what their identity is. And Kathy, you write about the five needs that every child has: the security, identity, belonging, purpose, competence, and why it's so important for us as parents to still be the arbiters of that. Talk about how in this conversation where a child says, okay, I love you and I'm going to share this with you. How do we hold it together while still reinforcing those and ourselves as the safe place to be the landing point for something that we know is really completely ridiculous, but it's deception and they have to see it that way?

Dr. Kathy Koch: Yeah. I appreciate you bringing that up. We think that we're in an identity crisis because we're in a security crisis. If kids don't know who they can trust, they don't know who to turn to in a time of need and confusion, they won't know who they are. So we have got to get better at security, telling the truth, being available, putting our phones down. It meaning when we don't know something, thanking them for coming to us. I think the first words out of our mouth should be, "Whoa, thanks for coming to me," because we need to recognize they can go to Google and they can go to Siri and they can go to X and they can go to really unhealthy, manipulative people who believe the radical ideology. So "thank you for choosing me, and let's figure this out together" is huge. And I think we say, "Man, I'm so sorry you're confused because I don't like it when I'm confused. I don't make good decisions when I'm confused." So I think we start with real conversations and then we lead them and guide them toward truth and toward "How much have you been able to trust for me? Have I misled you much, so can you trust me now?" And if they are Bible readers and Bible believers, "Can you bring up a time when, remember when God met your need

before? When you were so scared when you had to go to the big birthday party? And then how did God show up there? Let's believe God's going to show up again." So security in God, security in me, and then even teaching the children, "Hey, you can trust yourself to discern. You're not a stupid person. You're 14 years old. Now you have figured out who's healthy, who's unhealthy, and we're going to trust you to continue to do that."

Dr. Jeff Myers:

I think the identity question is huge. One thing that when we first started working on this, we realized it could be up to 30, 40% of young adults today who identify as LGBTQ, but they are little, they're middle schoolers. It is not about sexual attraction. It is about identity. Who am I? When we approach it as an identity issue rather than as a sexuality issue, I feel like, Kathy, the students really, they gravitate toward that a lot more because they know at their heart what they're really trying to do is ask the question, who wants me? Where do I belong? And we all need to feel that we belong. We all want to feel that way.

Dr. Kathy Koch:

Absolutely. And that's the third question. So when children and teens and even young adults know who they can trust and they know who they are, then they will know who will want them. And they'll be able to enter into relationships with a confidence. They'll be able to answer the question, who are you? And they'll have an identity that, well, I'm a band geek. What's your passion? And this summer, I volunteered at the nursing home and I've actually enjoyed it more than I thought I ever would. They have to have answers to the identity question so that they can walk into belonging and have confidence that somebody will want them. And of course, we need to be examples to them. We want you. I'm so glad you're my child, or my daughter or son. And then we present again that God is the ultimate fulfillment of that. The hole in your heart that only God is designed to fill through faith in Christ.

And then once we have belonging, we have people to serve and people to love, then we have purpose. Why am I alive? Great commandment, great commission to leave the world a better place, to solve problems alongside of God. The fact that He lets us participate with Him, it's such a miracle, right? He allowed us to write this book so we could speak into the chaos. It's such a privilege. And then when you have purpose, then you have competence. What do I do well? If you don't know why you're alive, then you don't need to do anything well, and it all starts with security. Who can I trust? God, Jesus, the Spirit, mom, dad, grandma, grandpa, stepdad, this pastor, my older brother. The more people they have who are trustworthy speaking the truth, the easier it is for them to reject the lie. And this is on us to have the boundaries and the barriers so that they can have these needs met in the triune God and then in us, because we're prayerfully good examples of who He is.

Roger Marsh:

Well, Dr. Jeff Myers, Dr. Kathy Koch, the time has flown by here in what is now part one of what will be a two-part conversation on the new book, *Raising Gender-Confident Kids: Helping Kids Embrace Their God-Given Design*. I'm hoping and trusting that you guys can come back next time to continue this conversation?

Dr. Jeff Myers: Yeah, should we?

Dr. Kathy Koch: Absolutely. Let's do it.

Dr. Jeff Myer: We should.

Dr. Kathy Koch: He's done a good job with part one. Let's trust him.

Dr. Jeff Myers: We'll be back.

Roger Marsh: Well, that is certainly good to hear. You know what, our kids start questioning something as foundational as their identity, our first response matters more than having all the right answers right away. And you're listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, and we've been featuring an eye-opening conversation featuring Dr. Jeff Myers, president of Summit Ministries, and Dr. Kathy Koch discussing raising gender-confident kids in today's confusing culture. Now, if you missed any part of today's broadcast or if you want to share it with a friend or family member who might have questions about this controversial topic, go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. And while you're there, be sure you also check out information on how you can get a copy of this brand new book called *Raising Gender-Confident Kids: Helping Kids Embrace Their God-Given Design*. It's a small book, it's relatively easy to read given the subject matter, and I highly recommend it to you. Again for information on Dr. Jeff Myers and Dr. Kathy Koch's new book called *Raising Gender-Confident Kids: Helping Kids Embrace Their God-Given Design*, go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

Programs like the one you heard today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk exist because friends like you believe that families need a trusted voice in these turbulent times, and based on the election results a couple of weeks ago, they're getting even more turbulent. The mission of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute has never been more urgent as we defend biblical truth about gender, family, and faith, while the culture around us grows increasingly hostile to these foundational principles. Now thanks to some special friends of the James Dobson Family Institute. The Dr. James Dobson Memorial Match is now in place and because of this match, any dollar amount that you donate between now and December 31st will be doubled up to \$6 million. You can support the work that we are doing here at the JDFI with this tax-deductible donation today. To take advantage of our special year-end match, go to drjamesdobson.org/broadcast. Or if you prefer, call a member of our constituent care team right now at 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh, and on behalf of everyone here at Family Talk and the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, thanks so much for joining us today. Be sure to join us again next time right here as we continue this important conversation with Dr. Jeff Meyers and Dr. Kathy Koch, talking about raising gender-confident kids. That's coming up on the next edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, the voice you can still trust, for the family you love.

This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.