



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** Raising Daughters Who Know Their Worth – Part 1

**Guest(s):** Robert and Bobbie Wolgemuth, Julie Tassy and Missy Schrader

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**Dr. James Dobson:** Welcome everyone to Family Talk. It's a ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute, supported by listeners just like you. I'm Dr. James Dobson, and I'm thrilled that you've joined us.

**Roger Marsh:** Well, welcome to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh. Ask any father with a daughter, and he'll tell you there's nothing quite like that special bond. Something unique happens between a dad and his little girl, and what he does with that relationship will shape her for the rest of her life. On today's edition of Family Talk, we're going to revisit a conversation Dr. Dobson had with his good friend Robert Wolgemuth, one of the most respected voices in the literary world and the author of the landmark book called *She Calls Me Daddy: Seven Things You Need to Know About Building a Complete Daughter*.

Now, Robert Wolgamuth knew his subject, not just as a writer, but also as a father who lived it out through his years of raising his daughters, Missy and Julie. Now, both daughters joined the conversation on today's program, along with their mother, Bobbie Wolgemuth, who sadly passed away in the fall of 2014 after a brave battle with cancer. Robert then remarried. He and his wife, author and ministry leader, Nancy Leigh DeMoss, led Revive Our Hearts Ministries for many years until Robert went home to be with the Lord earlier this year. Today we'll hear Robert Wolgemuth and Dr. Dobson dig into some of the most important principles a dad can carry. The balance of love and discipline, the power of open conversation, and why only a father can fill that role that God has designed specifically for him. So let's revisit this conversation right now on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

**Dr. James Dobson:** This is more than just a writing project for you. This really comes out of your heart, doesn't it?

**Robert Wolgemuth:** It really does. It comes out of when people have asked me how long it took to write, sometimes I say 25 years, because that really is the truth. And in fact, actually sitting down and committing these ideas to the computer didn't take as long as I thought it would because it was right out of my own experience. You know that experience, being there, and it's just a matter of getting it from your heart to the computer, and it rolls pretty quickly. So it was really a thrilling experience. I had no idea it would be so much fun to write.

Dr. James Dobson: Missy and Julie, how do you feel about being the subject of a book in this way? I'm sure you're all through it in so many illustrations.

Missy Schrader: It was actually really fun. It was very fun for us to read it and to read the stories and to say, I remember that. And then to look at the reasons. The whole book is in principles, and so each chapter is one principle. And to read the story and then relate it to the principle was exciting for us, especially me now as a parent, to say, ah. We know what he was thinking when he did that, and to kind of get under that was really fun. And understand the why.

Dr. James Dobson: And now you've got your own daughter, and you're going to translate some of that on down a generation, aren't you?

Missy Schrader: Well, hopefully.

Dr. James Dobson: And I'm sure John has read it.

Missy Schrader: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: Julie, you have also been very, very close to your parents through the years, haven't you?

Julie Tassy: Yes, I have.

Dr. James Dobson: A lot of your friends have never really understood that closeness. I know at one point in the book, you all said that your friends would say, you told your parents that, but you've been very open with them through the years, haven't you?

Julie Tassy: Yes. Even now, my friends don't understand that my parents, especially my dad, is someone that I go to for advice and for wisdom. And in asking someone for wisdom, you have to be honest with them. You can't just tell them part of the story.

Dr. James Dobson: And you just built a pond. in the backyard with your dad, the two of you out there constructing. What was this, Robert?

Robert Wolgemuth: I got a crazy idea three or four weeks ago. I was actually clearing an area to put a little patio, and a guy came over to power wash our deck behind the house, and he said, you ought to put a pond in there. And I said, a pond? So we started to look into it, and actually garden ponds are the happening thing these days. So we decided to build a pond. So I dug a hole eight feet by six feet and about three and a half feet deep. And Julie and I got a rock delivery last Friday, three and a half ton of rock.

Dr. James Dobson: I understand you're doing this. I don't understand how you got Julie to do this.

Robert Wolgemuth: We have really... working together is a big part of our lives. We've done projects from the time you guys were very small. We have a picture of Julie holding a cement block that's about as big as she is. But just for the fun of it.

Julie Tassy: Another one of our projects.

Robert Wolgemuth: Another one of our projects.

Dr. James Dobson: Now, Bobbie is here with us, the mother of these two beautiful girls, and she's going to say a little bit today, but not an awful lot. She hasn't said a word so far, and the reason is because she's having throat problems.

Bobbie Wolgemuth: Well, I'm here, and I'm going to take a lot of credit for these sweet girls, and, of course, I've just enjoyed so much.

Dr. James Dobson: You're not at all proud of them, are you?

Bobbie Wolgemuth: Oh, of course I am.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, let's get into the content of the book, Robert. You have a bottom line which again, we have talked about many times, but there is a theme in this book in raising healthy and responsible and God-fearing daughters, speaking as a father. What is that bottom line?

Robert Wolgemuth: Well, first of all, the most important issue is that raising this daughter cannot be abdicated. It is the dad's responsibility. You can't consign it to the school. You can't consign it to anyone else. So the most important thing that I want a dad to feel is the challenge of this being his responsibility. The other thing that's really important, though, is this is not about inducing guilt because the truth is many of the things that are in the book, are there because of my own error, my own mistakes.

Dr. James Dobson: How come the two girls are nodding?

Robert Wolgemuth: You learn two different ways. You learn by doing it right and saying, "Ah, that was right." And you learn by failing and saying, "That was wrong and I don't want to do that again." But again, I don't want this to be a guilt-inducing thing. I want this to be a great encouragement to dads who need instruction. It's like anything else in life. You don't just automatically come up with ideas on how to do things, whether it's flying an airplane or raising a daughter. You need specific help. So it's encouragement. It's responsibility. This is really your responsibility. Don't give it to anyone else. You're the only daddy she'll ever have. You can be a great dad.

Dr. James Dobson: Now, you gave a great answer to my question, but it wasn't the right answer.

Robert Wolgemuth: Oh, okay.

Dr. James Dobson: I've read the book, see.

Robert Wolgemuth: That's good.

Dr. James Dobson: The two components are you need to be very, very loving and very, very tough. The illustration, and in fact, the very first time I heard this was from you. The battery in your car works only because it has a positive and a negative pole. Your affection, your tenderness, your words of kindness, you're touching is the positive and the discipline is the negative you have to have all of both if you have 100% of one and 50% of the other then you become a permissive dad or you become an overbearing brutish dad on the other side of it you have to turn both of those up the whole way. That's exactly right. That's a very important thing.

Dr. James Dobson: Those two principles have real meaning for me in the Scriptures as well. If you look at the teachings of Jesus, it's positive and it's negative. Sin is terribly negative. Jesus said some of the most frightening words that have ever been spoken by a human being. He's talking about the consequences of dying without a remedy, without the salvation that He offered. And yet He offered hope and He offered love. It's the positive balanced with the negative. And in our culture, we tend to think only of the positive. But there is a role. I don't even like to call it negative. There's a role for discipline. And that's what you were trying to emphasize.

Robert Wolgemuth: It is. And the truth is that part of the problem with exercising that side of it is that you want to be liked by your kids. You want your daughter to always like her daddy. But the truth is, if you exercise your responsibility, there will be times when you will come in dead last in the dad sweepstakes of the year. They don't like what you've done. And really, it's not a bad thing to remind them in the process, this is not about being liked by you. This is about doing the right thing.

Dr. James Dobson: Missy and Julie, you now are grown and you're looking back on this loving, tough discipline. How do you see it? How does it look from this perspective?

Julie Tassy: I see it as something I'm very thankful for because I know that Dad did what was actually the hardest for him, and that it wasn't fun for him when he had to discipline us.

Dr. James Dobson: Missy, how do you see it?

Missy Schrader: I think that it gave us security, knowing we had boundaries that we knew. I've been a teacher, and you know in a classroom, if you have a substitute teacher, the teacher is going to be different than you are, and the children tend to kind of lose it because they're used to a certain schedule. And being parented in a way that we were, We knew it was expected of us, period. We'd go to a function, and on the way to wherever we were going, Mom and Dad would say, "We are going to so-and-so's house. You're going to see these adults, and we expect whatever behavior." So we knew it was expected of us, and I think that

that gave us security. We knew it was expected of us. I think that security was very important for us growing up. It was structure.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. Missy, somebody told me that you have observed in your role as a teacher so many youngsters who don't have that discipline and that structure and those boundaries and have kind of taken over control of their families and that this has enlightened you even more about what your parents were trying to do.

Missy Schrader: It's really amazing. Because just like Daddy was saying, there's a positive and a negative. And if there's so much positive, the ruler of the roost. And I would just be amazed at the way that children would talk to their parents, and it was not any big deal. I mean, you could tell that was what was normal. And instead of that parent saying, "I am the boss," we had a question. We actually had two questions that were asked to us often, and we knew the correct answer. One of them was, "Who's the boss?" And the answer was, "You are." Period. I mean, that was the answer. The other one was, "When do you obey?" "The first time."

Julie Tassy: We learned that.

Dr. James Dobson: You're a tyrant, Bob.

Missy Schrader: It wasn't like Sound of Music where he blew the whistle or anything. But those two principles, that he is the boss and we obey the first time, that's the foundation of it. And the children that I saw that did not have the parent as the boss, they could do whatever.

Robert Wolgemuth: The goal is to build discipline. And the way of building discipline, discipline the noun. The way of building discipline is discipline the verb. You can exercise to build muscles because the goal is to be strong. So what you do, even when they're small, you play games. This isn't all leaning in on the kids and being ugly. At the dinner table, we would have the no game. And we would say, "Okay, now tomorrow night, what we want to do is have a report of when you said no to yourself today." It doesn't have to be even a bad thing. Just like, for example, one of the reports would be "I was on the phone with my friend and I said I have to be off the phone in five minutes. And so I made the decision in five minutes that five minutes was up. And so I said, 'I have to hang up now.'"

Dr. James Dobson: Teaching self-control.

Robert Wolgemuth: Absolutely. And so what you do is you build those muscles so that when it comes time for more important things, then no is something you understand how to work. You say no to yourself, you make it stick. Nobody else is watching. This is an internal thing. And really, it's very biblical that even in the Garden of Eden, in the midst of perfection, there was a no. You'd think the Garden of Eden would be a place where there was all yeses. It was perfect, after all. But in the Garden of Eden, there was a no. And that's as positive as any other positive thing could be.

- Dr. James Dobson: If you look at a magnificent orchestra or a physician who's become a great surgeon, you look at human excellence. Discipline is always a key to it.
- Robert Wolgemuth: That's right.
- Dr. James Dobson: You know, it is always a key. And yet in our culture, we really lost an awareness of the role that it plays. And we think only of management. It's beyond management. It's self-discipline and self-control. It is respect for another human being. It's in the relationship. It's not just getting a child to do what you want them to do, but it is in building attitudes in the relationship.
- Bobbie Wolgemuth: And that discipline is a gift not only to the girls. They would say now that the discipline that they have as adults to be able to say no to themselves on something that would probably wreck their schedule that day or that is not good to eat or whatever, is a gift to them. I would say it was a gift to Robert and me because when the girls were in high school and college, it was a gift to us knowing that they knew how to say no to themselves and we didn't have to worry that they were going to make terrible decisions. And I think that is the goal of the discipline. Sometimes the girls would come to me and would say, "Daddy is being a little hard," and usually my response was, "You need to go and talk to him about it. If you think he's being too hard, then talk to him." Because I didn't want to build a relationship with Missy and Julie where Robert was the adversary. Then when they would talk it out, usually it was resolved. Their relationship was strengthened. And the communication and the conversation was absolutely the most important building block that I feel like Robert gave Missy and Julie.
- Dr. James Dobson: Boy, you're hitting on a very important principle. The mother is the primary interpreter of the father to the kids. And the father is the primary interpreter of the mother to the kids. And if either of them doesn't do that job properly, then the relationship begins to deteriorate there. So you were supporting what he was trying to do.
- Robert Wolgemuth: And talking, Bobbie just said it, and it's also an incredibly important part of this book that conversation learning how to talk back and forth using your tennis ball illustration where your temptation as a dad is to have your daughter throw a tennis ball to you. She says something about her day at school and instead of asking a question back you stick the tennis ball in your pocket because you have a newspaper to read but instead you throw it back and you're learning how to talk we had a little rule on the weekend. When I had an errand to run, I never did it alone. I took one of the kids with me. So that we're riding along in the car now, and they're just old enough to be able to see over the top of the door. And it's hard to come up with conversation with a four-year-old. I mean, really. So what you do is you think of things like, let's count how many buses we pass, or let's count the trucks, or we pass a field and there are cows on the field. Count the cows. So what you're doing is you're learning how to talk to each other. Those, again, are muscles that you build so that when the stakes are much higher, what you've learned to do is talk.

And really talking, again, as Bobbie said, talking is like the release valve on a compressor tank that keeps the tank from blowing up. Usually when relationships are destroyed, it's because of what hasn't been said, not what has been said. And so you learn to come to each other when you're about to blow up. And instead of doing something foolish, You talk about it, and it releases that pressure. But it starts as early as you possibly can start it with just learning how to talk to each other, how to listen, how to respond.

Julie Tassy: I think most girls talk to their moms. They tell their moms everything. They ask their moms for advice. And a lot of times that was the temptation. Not that that's a bad thing, but to completely block out a father-daughter relationship.

Dr. James Dobson: You have to work at it, don't you? It's not quite as natural.

Julie Tassy: Because it's a lot easier for a daughter to relate to her mother because they are so similar usually. So I think that was something that was encouraged for Missy and me to talk to dad, not just to talk to mom, especially if there were a problem, if there was something that needed to be said to dad from Missy or me.

Robert Wolgemuth: Would your dad accept it when you came to him and said, "I don't think you were fair. That cheerleader trip is important to me, and I think you gave too quick an answer." Would he accept that? I don't mean would he give in. Would he sit down and talk to you about it?

Julie Tassy: Yes. He wouldn't always give in. Rarely give in. But. To give us it.

Missy Schrader: Daddy definitely valued what we would say and would look at us like he's looking at me right now, not quick to an emotional response. That we're... A woman is much more...and I am one, so I can say this. Our emotions much more will take over. As soon as we hear something, we may just say something that may not necessarily be the thought through process. Where Daddy, when we would say something to him, we were talking about this yesterday. If I were to come to Daddy with something I had done wrong and I felt like I needed to confess this, I could trust that Daddy would listen to that and think it through and then give me his honest opinion rather than just going emotionally to something.

Dr. James Dobson: In fact, in the book, you make the point that you never punish the girls for telling the truth.

Robert Wolgemuth: This is, as I've talked to friends over the years, this is always a very lively discussion to have with friends, where we didn't really say these words to the girls. Bobbie and I had this understanding, but what Bobbie and I said to each other was, if the girls tell us the truth, there'll be no punishment for what they've done. Now, there may be consequences. If you break something, you have to replace it. If you steal something, you have to return it. But what often happens, I think, is that children are secretive and dishonest because they're

afraid of the implications or the results of them telling the truth. And what their parents ultimately want is for them to tell the truth. Now, people would say, well, that just gives your kids license. Well, this isn't our idea. This is really a Scriptural idea. The Apostle Paul said, why would you go on sinning if you don't have to? In one of the modern translations. That is, our love for Him compels us to right living. So that if you have the relationship and telling the truth about something that you've done that's wrong, it's a very painful thing to disclose to someone that you love. So that has tremendous implication on your conduct. So we did have that rule.

Julie Tassy: Knowing that you're going to tell the truth and that you are not a good liar and that you probably can't fool your parents because it's written all over your face is going to make you think before you do something wrong. When you're in that judgment process, you think, I'm going to have to tell the truth. I might as well go ahead and not do what I shouldn't do.

Bobbie Wolgemuth: Another reason I really was excited that the girls had the ability to converse with Robert. I felt like the conversation and the ability to communicate with their dad affected greatly their dating relationships because they are going to be dating boys for a long time and their marriages. The whole marriage relationship is a woman being able to communicate with a man. And to help that relationship be built and strengthened gave them a fabulous beginning to a fabulous marriage. And I believe because of the relationship I have with my dad, Robert has often said to me, the relationship you had with your father enabled you to be a trusting wife and an open wife with me. And I think that relationship was very important for me to see develop with their dad.

Dr. James Dobson: There is so much in your book for us to talk about, and the time really got away from us in a big hurry today. Let's just continue and pick up some other points from the book, and then we'll air that next time. Furthermore, we've got a gallery just jammed with people today, and I want to give them an opportunity to come to the microphone and ask some questions as well. Specifically, I'm hoping to talk to you all about the spiritual development of kids and the role of fathers play in that. And also the early years when dads are so busy and how you deal with that. Some other things. We'll get into that next time. Thanks for being with us for today.

Robert Wolgemuth: We loved it.

Bobbie Wolgemuth: Thank you.

Roger Marsh: Well, it turns out the most important thing a father can give his daughter isn't protection or provision. It's the confidence that he's actually paying attention. You're listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, and we're revisiting a rich conversation featuring Dr. Dobson and his dear friend, Robert Wolgemuth, joined by Robert's daughters, Missy and Julie, and their late mother, Bobbie. Now, if you'd like to hear today's program again, or to share it with a dad who needs some encouragement, visit us at [jdfi.org](http://jdfi.org). And while you're there, be sure

you also look for a link for Robert's book called *She Calls Me Daddy: Seven Things You Need to Know About Building a Complete Daughter*.

And if today's conversation resonated with you as a parent, I want to point you to a wonderful free resource from the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. We've developed a 10-day email series based on Dr. Dobson's best-selling book called *Bringing Up Girls*, and it's designed to help you think carefully and intentionally about raising your daughter in a culture that isn't always on her side. From instilling values and self-worth to navigating the pressures she'll face, this series walks alongside you with practical biblical wisdom. To sign up, remember, it's absolutely free, just go to [jdfi.org](http://jdfi.org) and search for "Bringing Up Girls," that title for the series.

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Well, I'm Roger Marsh, and on behalf of all of us here at Family Talk and the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, thanks so much for listening today. Be sure to join us again next time for part two of this powerful conversation featuring author Robert Wolgemuth discussing why "she calls me daddy" is a very important mantra for fathers to follow. That's coming up right here on the next edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, the voice you trust for the family you love.

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

Dr. James Dobson: Someone said, "If you connect a boy to the right man, he seldom goes wrong." And I believe that to be true.

Roger Marsh: With today's Dr. Dobson Minute, here's Dr. James Dobson.

Dr. James Dobson: A dad and a son or a daughter can develop some common interests together, the rebellious years really shouldn't be all that troubling. I had that kind of relationship with my own father. I thought back to the very happiest moments of my childhood. How my dad and I would get up very early on a wintry morning and head about 20 miles outside of town to our favorite place. We'd park the

car, we'd climb over a fence, and follow a little creek bed back to an area that I called the Big Woods. Those moments together with my dad were absolutely priceless to me. There was a closeness that made me want to be like him. To choose his values as my values. That's the power of a man, to set a kid on the right road.

Roger Marsh:

For more information on this topic, visit [drdobsonminute.org](http://drdobsonminute.org).