

Family Life... I wish our adult daughter talked to us more

Situation:

I'd like your suggestions about an ongoing dilemma with our only daughter. My wife and I are both in our mid seventies and our only child Rachel is nearing 50. Rachel writes beautifully, usually through emails, yet says very little when we visit face-to-face. We do have several common interests. Should I keep trying to draw her out in our personal talks, or be content with her writing to us?

Answer:

Let me begin with: Rachel's not wrong, she's average. Some people like to talk, other express themselves easier by writing. Sounds as though she does a pretty good job of sharing her feelings, it's just not in the medium that you'd like it to be.

Wants and needs come to mind – you want to be able to sit down and have a good discussion, and what you really need is peace of mind. You're not wrong, you're average for wanting it to be different, and you can't afford to keep striving for something that isn't apt to happen.

It sounds as if you're seeking the "perfect" relationship with your "only" child. Are you being realistic?

Instead of thinking that there's something "lacking", think about the fact that Rachel does indeed share what's going on in her mind and in her world. If I were you, I'd start dwelling on the fact that you do have good communication. Thank God for email – without it, Rachel might not be able to tell her loving parents about what's happening in her life. Since the advent of email – do you find that you're learning more about Rachel's feelings/ideas?

If trying to draw her into face-to-face conversations does not work, causes you frustration and disappointment and perhaps some sadness, stop trying to make her something that she's not. Writing, not speaking is her average – and lots of other people's too.

Unconditional love means I love you just the way you are – no matter what you do or do not do, no matter what you do or do not say.