



A stylized illustration of a hand holding a pie, with a speech bubble containing the title 'Real Talk' and a banner below it. The background is a yellow and orange gradient with a dashed line.

A

By Tiffany Horne

Real Talk

WITH DAD

DAD KNEW MORE ABOUT WHAT I WAS GOING THROUGH THAN I THOUGHT.

School was out for Thanksgiving break, but I was not looking forward to it. I was struggling at school, and I wasn't thrilled with the idea of being surrounded by family members who were in the mood for holiday cheer. It seemed to me that I didn't have a whole lot to be thankful for.

"Who is it?" my dad called from the kitchen as I came in the front door after school.

"It's me," I called back.

He came to give me a hug and invited me to help him make pies. I'd been hoping he would just tell me to relax, but all he said was, "I really could use your help."

At first the task was tedious—one cup of this, two teaspoons of that. I'd never talked a lot with my father. I could ask him to help me with my homework, or he could tell me to do the dishes. But it seemed that deeper conversations just didn't happen between us. So we went on working side by side until he asked a simple question: "How's school going?"

I started talking about how school was *really* going—my frustrations, my worries, the things I

liked, and the things I didn't like. I talked and he listened. After I was done, it was his turn. He told me stories of his high school days and how he had experienced some of the same frustrations and delights. He gave me advice that I actually needed to hear.

We discovered that we didn't have any bananas for the banana cream pie. "I guess I'll have to run to the store," my dad said.

"Can I come with you?" I asked. He agreed. Off we went, singing to the radio at the top of our lungs the whole way. I don't remember ever having such a fun time on a trip to the grocery store.

The pies were all gone after a few days, but I will never forget talking with my dad while making them. It was the first time that I realized that my dad was just a person like me, the first time I saw that in addition to being my father, he could also be a friend. I learned to appreciate my whole family more and the small memories we create each day. I went back to school with a newfound motivation. For some reason, I felt like I had so much to be thankful for. **NE**

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