

## **ENHANCING MOTHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIPS**

### **Strengthening the bonds across the generations**

Many mothers and daughters across the world feel hurt and angry with each other, when historically they used to enjoy a close relationship. Many feel misunderstood, let down, guilty, and hurt by each other, while yearning to feel loved and supported. This huge problem deserves to be understood and addressed.

As an experienced professional in the mother-daughter relationship field, with international experience, I see women and daughters searching to create the important mother-daughter bonds that can be truly fulfilling, and meaningful to families and across generations. The following facts help women understand today's dynamics between mothers and daughters.

1. Women's lives have markedly changed over the past three generations due to changes in women's roles, increased mobility and immigration, broken and blended families, and economic crises. These changes have created a 'generation gap' between mothers and daughters. Daughters no longer live the same life their mothers lived. Some experience this difference as a rejection, an abandonment of traditional female beliefs, and a lack of connection and love. Some mothers also feel jealous of their daughter's choices and opportunities. Maternal jealousy is a much hidden emotion that deserves to be heard and healed, rather than hidden and shamed. It originates from mothers mourning their unfulfilled dreams and opportunities.
2. The underlying cause of mother-daughter conflict is the mistreatment of women. Sexism, gender inequality, violence, and abuse harms a mother's and daughter's ability to create a strong loving relationship. The focus of the relationship becomes surviving the abuse and navigating the sexism rather than building self-worth and an empowered female future.
3. Mothers and daughters need to know their mother-daughter history because it is their roots and source of wisdom and power. Knowing the stories of her mother's and grandmothers' lives eases the anger and blame a daughter can feel towards her mother. It helps her understand how sexism and inequality limited her mother's choices and identifies the 'good' and 'not-so-good' themes and beliefs that she has inherited.
4. Mothers and daughters need to learn how to say what they need, especially their emotional needs. When a mother cannot voice her needs, she will unconsciously expect her daughter to meet her needs for her. She will be unable to teach her daughter how to voice and meet her own needs. Disowned and unexpressed emotional needs make mothers and daughters hungry for each other's attention which causes many arguments.
5. The mother-daughter relationship deserves to be a priority. Teaching and coaching mothers and daughters to listen to each other and map their mother-daughter history creates strong loving relationships where both feel heard, understood, and loved.

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